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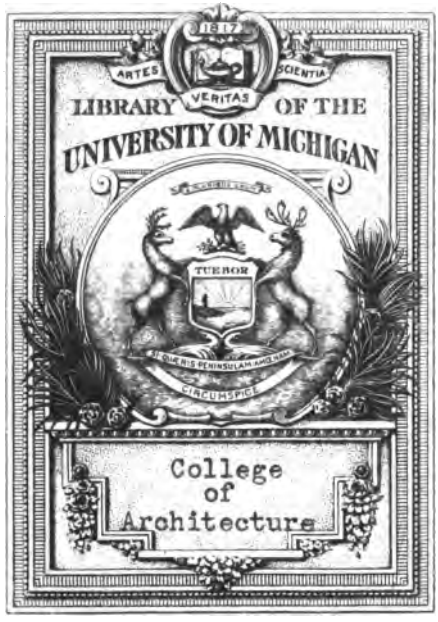
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THE IMPROVEMENT of TOWNS AND CITIES

CHARLES MULFORD ROBINSON



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AUTHOR OF "MODERN CIVIC ART"
"CITY PLANNING, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PLANNING OF STREETS AND LOTS"
"THE CALL OF THE CITY"
ETC.

FOURTH, REVISED, EDITION



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PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

IN preparing a fully revised edition of this volume, twelve years after its first publication, there is offered a perspective in which several interesting facts stand out. Of much prominence and encouragement is the progress which has been attained. On page after page it has been necessary to amplify data and to recast the statements relating conditions so that an expression of hope or expectation might be changed into a chronicle of facts, that what were described as experiments might be transformed into a record of achieved successes, and that isolated instances should be shown as now significant of a trend or to have become already typical. Although the book was written with much confidence in the awakening of a popular wish for city and town improvement, it was not realized that in a dozen years so much progress would have been made.

If, as some have kindly suggested, the volume itself has had a share in causing this swift advance, by inciting the wish and showing the way, the author feels well repaid for the research that went into its preparation at a time when such study was, to say the least, unusual and difficult. The persistently steady demand which the book has since enjoyed justifies this new revision, for which the undisputed possession of its field has imposed a measure of obligation.

Also, the twelve-year perspective reveals a striking development of the community viewpoint, in the broadened grasp of the popular conception of improvement work. This has expressed itself particularly in the public approval of what is called town, or city, planning—a study which has to do primarily with the street system; but incidentally with all which affects that system. When it is realized that until very recently cities and towns grew a street at a time, the street's location, width, direction, and grade determined generally by neighborhood considerations and controlled for the most part by the inclination of only an individual tract owner, there will be appreciation of the long forward step which has been taken in city building when experts are called upon to study the needs of the town as a whole and to plan the main lines of its extension and improvement. This work has now attained to the dignity of a profession, taught in the colleges and having in all countries a significant body of legislation growing about it.

In a later volume the author has discussed this phase of city building. It is enough here to note its development, observing that the work which city planning does for better towns and cities cannot supersede the efforts described in the present book. The best planned city, like the best planned house, must be still taken care of, kept in repair, and kept adjusted to changing conditions and requirements, through the intelligent interest of those who live in it.

C. M. R.

Rochester, N. Y.,
July 15, 1913.

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FOREWORD

A WHOLE volume might be written on the subject of any one of the chapters here given. In several of the cases there is a shelfful of books on the matter of a single chapter—as on the paving of streets, or a large volume on a single thought or phase of a chapter, as on Trees in Paris. The purpose of this book, then, is not exhaustive discussion. It does not pretend to say all that can be said of the work for beauty in cities and villages; but reviewing the whole broad field of the modern effort, it tries to pick out the salient points, to declare the best that has been done along every line, and how and when and where it was done — encouraging by showing the progress attainable because somewhere attained. So it would supplement with constructive criticism that which heretofore has been so largely destructive.

But it has other practical purpose even than this. It would be not only a handbook for ready reference, for suggestion, and for incentive along each special line of the work for beauty. It would show the co-ordination of the efforts, the dependence of each upon all the others, in order to secure a logi-

cal, harmonious result; the place and duty of each regiment of fighters in the battle for urban beauty, and would be a reminder that none fights alone. There is no one panacea for the ugliness, dreariness, or monotony of towns and cities; there is no one road to victory. There must be parallel conquests by highway and by footpath, by field and wood, by hill and dale. There is work enough for all and a place for each.

The specialist, seeing much in little, does not see far. In zeal for pavements one forgets the trees; in zeal for parks the thoroughfare is forgotten. It has seemed well, then, in the great new awakening of enthusiasm and concern for city beauty in a score of directions, at last to grasp them all, to group them logically in a single volume and show the relative positions. This wish determined the underlying syllabus on which, as indicated in the Table of Contents, the book has been built up.

It would have been impossible to indite such a volume in the seclusion of one's study. There must have been far and studious travel. And the author acknowledges his obligation for suggestions, for encouragement, and for cordial aid to many active workers, men and women, in East and West. Of many nations, several languages, and many specialties, all proved themselves one brotherhood in the joyous and earnest new crusade for beauty of town and city. Theirs is a mighty army, "marching as to war," in crusade against the ugly and debased. They make Aristotle's

definition of the city their own — a place "where men live a common life for a noble end."

In citing by name the many societies which have done some definite thing to improve a community's appearance, the design has been to enable any worker or student to write, if he desires, to the original source for the complete details. Usually these will be given readily, both as to operations and results, and so no experience need go for naught. How widespread the examples are, how mighty is the present movement for civic renaissance, is indicated by the following partial list of organizations whose work, in one way or another, has here a mention: American Institute of Architects, American Park and Outdoor Art Association, American Society of Landscape Architects, American Society of Municipal Improvements, Architectural Club of Chicago, Architectural Club of Milwaukee, Architectural Club of Pittsburg, Architectural League of America, Architectural League of New York, Art Association of San Francisco, Art Federation of Philadelphia, Art for Schools Association of London, Association for the Protection of Fifth Avenue, New York; Associated Improvement Association of Oakland, Cal.; Boston Common Society, Boston Society of Architects, Brooklyn Woman's Club, Business Men's Club of Cincinnati, Camera Club of Albany, N. Y.; Charity Organization Society of New York, Chicago Woman's Club, Children's Playground Association of Baltimore, Citizens' Association of Chicago, City and Suburban Homes Company of

New York, City Branch of Fairmont Park Art Association of Philadelphia, City Improvement Society of Denver, City Improvement Society of New York, City of Hamilton (Canada) Improvement Society, Cockburn Association of Edinburgh, Coal Smoke Abatement Society of London, Commercial Club of Indianapolis, Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society of London, Civic Center of Washington, Civic Club of Hartford, Civic Club of Philadelphia, Civic Federation of Chicago, Culture Extension League of Philadelphia, Fairmount Park Art Association of Philadelphia, Fine Arts Federation of New York, Fine Arts Union of Washington, Forestry Association of Buffalo, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Genesee Valley Forestry Association of Rochester, Guild of Civic Art of Toronto, Hill Improvement League of Brooklyn, Judson Avenue Improvement Association of Evanston, Ill.; Juvenile Street Cleaning Leagues (general), Kyrle Society of London, Laurel Hill Association of Stockbridge, Mass.; League of American Municipalities, Logan Avenue Improvement Association of Denver, Maryland Historical Society, Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Merchants' Association of San Francisco, Metropolitan Public Gardens Association of London, Minneapolis Improvement League, Municipal Art League of Chicago, Municipal Art Society of Baltimore, Municipal Art Society of Cincinnati, Municipal Art Society of Cleveland, Municipal Art Society of New York, Municipal Improvement Association of New Orleans, National Arts Club of New York,

National Sculpture Society, National Society of Mural Painters, National Society for the Protection of Sites and Monuments, Belgium; New York County Medical Society, Œuvre Nationale Belge, Outdoor Recreation League of New York, Oak Park Improvement Society of Chicago, Park Memorial Tree Association of Indianapolis, Public Art League, Public Green Association of New Haven, Reform Club of New York, Royal Institute of British Architects, London; Smoke Abatement Society of New York, Social Settlements (general), Society for Checking Abuses of Public Advertising, England; Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor, New York; Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, London; State Federations of Women's Clubs (general), State Leagues of Municipalities in California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin; Thames Preservation League, London; Tree Planters' Society of Kansas City, Tree Planting and Fountain Society of Brooklyn, Tree Planting Society of New York, Twentieth Avenue Improvement Association of Denver, Twentieth Century Club of Boston, United Women of Maryland, Universities of California, Columbia, Harvard, Pennsylvania, and Yale, and American School of Architecture at Rome; Village Improvement Societies (various), Vine Planting Society of New York, West End Improvement Association of Rochester, Woman's Club of Denver, Woman's Industrial and Educational Union of Rochester.

Among the official bodies which also are men-

tioned are: Art Institute, Chicago; City Loan Exhibition, London; City Music Commission, Boston; City Park Commissions (various), City Tree Commissions (various), Committee for the Survey and Registration of the Old Memorials of Greater London, Commission du Vieux Paris, Commission de Décoration de l'Hôtel de Ville, Paris; Corporation Art Gallery of Glasgow, London County Council, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Metropolitan Park Commission, Boston; Municipal Art Galleries (various English cities), Municipal Schools of Art (Birmingham and Manchester, England), Museum of Fine Arts of Boston, National Art Commission (proposed for United States), New York Street Commission, Royal Commission of Monuments, Belgium; and Municipal Art Commissions.

May, 1901

POSTSCRIPT

Numerous as are the names given above, they do not now cover the organised activity in behalf of the æsthetic phase of town life. Such, in fact, has been the progress of the movement since this book was written, that a careful estimate at the end of 1906 put the number of these organisations in the United States alone at not less than two thousand. That the years have brought changes as well as additions is natural, but the list as printed contains the names specifically mentioned in the text. The reader who desires to learn further of the work should secure names and addresses corrected to date from one of the general societies, as the American Civic Association (*Vd.* pg. 300), or from the author, who will be glad to help as far as he can.

The movement's rapid progress has also invited notes describing further developments, and these have been collected at the end of the volume, pp. 299–301. If a pertinent topic is not found in the index, it should be sought in these addenda.

C. M. R.

FEBRUARY, 1907.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF TOWNS AND CITIES

CHAPTER I

THE SITE OF THE CITY

THE site is a primary consideration in the construction of a beautiful city or village. There is, however, this to be noted about it. Of itself, it can neither secure nor prohibit city beauty. A dozen cities make some pretence of splendor without the slightest regard for the natural features of their site, and a hundred are plain or ugly when, on such a site, they might have been rendered splendid.

Vienna lies in a vast plain, its stateliness independent of any natural advantages; Brussels owes almost none of its attractiveness to the conditions of the site it occupies; Washington has grown in the opposite direction from that which was designed, and made, when this book was written, scant use of the broad sweep of the Potomac. London, on the other hand, is notoriously lacking as a

whole in beauty, though the position of a large part of the city is not without potential magnificence on the slowly rising eminence to the north of the river; and lower New York, with rare beauty of site, has let years pass without worthily availing itself of the æsthetic possibilities of its water-front. Only now and then, as in the picturesqueness of Edinburgh, the impractical poetry of Venice, the panorama of the Golden Horn, or the regal possibilities of Riverside Heights, New York, does topography stamp its character on a neighborhood so insistently that the city must have beauty in spite of itself.

If the task that lies before men to-day were only the construction of a beautiful city from the very beginning; if we could plot it first on paper, and its problems were only those of engineering, it were easy to assure for it magnificence by the choice of site. But a dozen considerations, of which beauty is the last — when admitted at all — determine a city's position, and to-day, even in the United States, the problem is not to choose a site but to make the most of that now occupied. So it is something to know that the site, primary consideration as it must always be in a study of city beauty, may or may not have in itself a fair degree of beauty without prejudicing the appearance of the city; that a well-planned city may attain attractiveness and even splendor without its aid; and that, again, a good position can be so ignored in the urban plan that the appearance of the city may be entirely unbenefited by it. Obviously, the examples should give many suggestions, and from

their illustration villages as well as towns may profit.

In a review of the world's principal cities, far the greater number will be observed to be situated on uneven ground and at the side of water. In a consideration of site, the possession of a water-front may be taken for granted almost with the confidence of an inequality in surface. Indeed, the economic demands of traffic are of such insistence that unevenness tends to obliteration so far as the surface irregularities are small, while the water-frontage is exaggerated.

With castle-fortress on its rock of greatest elevation, old Edinburgh fairly typifies the plan of those mediæval cities which were born of feudalism. It often happens that a church shared the height and sometimes it alone remains, or, as in the case of Notre Dame de la Garde of Marseilles, and in many another city — back to the temples that were on the Acropolis at Athens — these heights are singly dedicated to religious worship. In Rome the Pincian Hill is crowned by a public garden; in New Haven, Conn., the great East Rock is a park; in Montreal the mountain is thus made use of; and in the old city of Avignon one finds, to-day, church and castle on the dominating hill and then, a few steps higher, on the very summit, a park. The attitude thus widely illustrated, that the highest point of a city should be used for public purpose, for defence, or worship, or recreation, seems well assumed.

It is not often that buildings for the public business of a modern city can be placed on the dominating height without disadvantage, except from the æsthetic point of view — though the capitol in Washington and many State capitols are so placed with us, and Brussels has planted the new Palais de Justice on a height. But we may reaffirm the original principle, practical in the park at least, that to the eminence whence the city may be mastered at a glance, and where its noise and turmoil may be left behind, all the people should have access. And no more certainly for the view thence than for the view thither, as the height commands and lords the town, should it, in the perfect city, be held by the community rather than by individuals. This is the great lesson in the treatment of inequalities of surface.

In the course of years the sheet of water, which has ceased to be a necessity to the commercial or industrial prosperity of a community, like the height which is no more needed for defence, may become a community's luxury. It will then be treated as such, as in the case of "the Lake-front" at Chicago, or the Victoria Embankment on the Thames; but it must be long before this common feature of urban topography will become simply an æsthetic problem. With the seaports some, at least, of the water-front must be the mart of commerce, and industry must yet find cheap power in city streams. Therefore the treatment of the water-front, that a city may derive the greatest artistic advantage from this element in the natural features

of its site, is a complicated question. It is to be determined with reference to the use of the water by the community, whether it be mainly for (1) power; (2) navigation; or (3) picturesqueness. In different parts of the same city a stream of water may be put to each of these uses. The æsthetic problem then becomes, practically, that of three communities.

In the first case, where the city has been located upon a stream for the sake of the water-power, we have to look for very little in the way of artistic development along the water-front. The best that can be said is that the industrial structures will tend to screen from view the polluted stream, and that the town, if it draws most of its energy from this source, is likely to be of no great size. Heretofore the usual treatment has consisted in the construction of a race on one or both sides of the river, and parallel to it, with the factories located between the race and the natural stream, and shutting the latter out from view except as bridges disclose it. The factories, turning a blind side to the river, naturally make no pretence to beauty or adornment on that façade, and the view up or down the stream as it tumbles and tosses through the brick cañon is dismal in the extreme. In such a case it cannot be said that the water-front, as far as it lies in the industrial portion of the town, adds anything to the beauty of the site; and perhaps the plan adopted in Rochester, N. Y., where the main street is carried over the river on a bridge built up

on either side with business structures (like old London Bridge, with never a hint that it spans the river), is as good as another. Certainly it has the negative virtue of preventing an intrusive interruption by the purely industrial and hideous. Now and then, to be sure, even an industrial water-front can afford a certain weird picturesqueness of view on a dark afternoon, when the myriad lights twinkle from the factory windows, the buildings silhouette themselves in irregular masses against the sky, and the dark water is only a sound below. But any such charm, purely urban as it is, is accidental and fleeting.

It is possible that the dawn of an electrical age may relieve the city builder from the unhappy sacrifice of the water view in an industrial community. The stream that, by rapid current or fall, offers such power as to invite the location of a city must in its natural condition have considerable beauty. It were well indeed for a town if, in the very midst of artificiality and restraint, such a picture could be preserved of the freedom and wildness of nature. The most conspicuous and promising example of what this new mode of "harnessing" a river for the use of its power at a distance may mean is afforded in the case of Niagara Falls. A mile above the falls, and well in from the river bank, a great manufacturing community is now arising, while — through the intervention of the State government, as it happens in that particular instance — the scenery above and near the cataract is preserved in the grandeur of primitive

conditions. The transmission of electrical power is already so successful that Niagara is driving profitably a thousand manufactories, of which not one is even in sight from the river. For practical discussion, then, the problem of treating the borders of a power stream may pass into the class in which beauty is the sole end. Its water-front would become a leading, instead of an ignored, element in the picturesqueness of a city's site.

When commerce has located a city upon a body of water whose navigable quality determines its use as a highway, the ideal treatment of the water-front is extended into a whole group of problems. From the extremes of a palace on a Venetian canal to the floating piers of a tidal seaport there is too long a way to make one rule applicable, for the painted posts that hold light gondolas so easily would break off short with the strain of an ocean liner in the current. One broad distinction may well be drawn at the start. We may ask ourselves whether the sheet of water is the proper approach and entrance to the city, as in the case of a harbor; or whether it is merely a public highway. If it be the first, it may suitably demand a dignity, grandeur, and largeness of treatment which were out of place in the second. Perhaps there is no cause for the failure in the treatment of water-fronts so common as a disregard of this first distinction.

The lower and upper bays of New York, treated properly, make the sail up the harbor exceptionally fine. The colossal Statue of Liberty, with its

welcome at the very gates of the hospitable city, is so excellent in spirit that not until the stranger has actually landed, and stepped into the meanness and squalor of West Street, does disappointed surprise come upon him. If it were possible for the entrance to be made at the Battery, how different the impression would be! Picture the progress out of the limitless ocean into the hill-circled lower bay, through the fort-crowned narrows, into the upper bay with its dominating goddess of classic stamp, and on, slowly, through the swarm of shipping, toward the sun-swept towers and spires, rising high, and almost grandly as set off by the greensward at their feet. Picture landing there, the tall buildings, sentinel portals of the city, standing just across the green, while between them the great artery of the city pierces, lined with wealth and choked with traffic, to lead straight on, mile after mile, through the city's maze. That were a worthy and impressive approach, to which the slums of West Street offer sad contrast.

The actual problem is complicated, because West Street is not merely portal but border to a long waterway. The clothing of convenience with dignity which Genoa has secured in the treatment of its water-front is not easy here, nor is the unity which comes from concentration at Marseilles. Liverpool, in its docks along the Mersey, long wrestled with the same problem as unsuccessfully as New York, while Antwerp, also dealing with it, has been bolder and slightly more fortunate in result. New York is conscious, at any rate, that it

has failed. It encouragingly perceives that the North and East rivers ought not to be treated by the municipality as mere country streams, but as arms of the harbor.

In the season of 1898–99, the Architectural League made "New York's Water-Front and Its Future Embellishment" the subject of discussion at one of its monthly dinners, and various schemes of more or less practicability and interest were unfolded. The point of the matter was that better things can be done and should be done. On the map, West Street is two hundred and fifty feet wide from the west front of the houses on the east side of the street to the established bulkhead line, and beyond that the piers stretch out five hundred to nine hundred feet further. There is opportunity here for one of the most beautiful water-fronts in the world, but the realization is a marginal street worthy of a frontier town and so incumbered with storehouses, ferry-houses, sheds, piles of merchandise, etc., as in places to be less than seventy feet wide and unsightly beyond description. In the fall of 1899 Mr. Coler, the comptroller of New York, came out with a plea for the abolition of the provisions of the municipal debt limit so far as they apply to bonds issued for public works, such as docks, that yield a revenue and in time pay for themselves. There are reasons that may justify dread of such removal in the case of New York; but it is clear that, should a municipality do this, the city would be in a position to treat its water-front far more worthily than most American seaports

ever have. With New York, for instance, a dream of restoring to the marginal street its theoretical width by the removal of all obstructions, and then the erection of perhaps continuous, and certainly harmonious, buildings for the needs of commerce, with a possible use of the second story by freight tracks and an esplanade atop of all whence to view the ever animated scene and get the summer breezes, would cease to be as visionary as at present. The plan can be made to look as interestingly feasible financially as from an engineering point of view, and obviously the æsthetic advance would be very great.[1] Its example would be the more valuable, also, because in principle so widely applicable, the problem rising in many places. Thus Philadelphia has faced an ideal treatment of the Delaware River front. This would carry the traffic from the docks and warehouses to Market Street by an underground system, while Water Street could extend to the bulkheads at its own level. It may, in fact, be said in general that railroad tracks are better depressed than raised — æsthetically, since they detract from beauty or splendor; practically, since the water-front street is usually at a lower level than others.

With the water-frontage of bisecting streams,

[1] Addresses at the November dinner of the Architectural League, New York, 1898. It may be added that for commercial purposes the city is now undertaking improved treatment of the water-front. For more than half a mile below Twenty-third Street it is building a granite sea-wall, with a marginal street two hundred and fifty feet wide.

cities — when making any pretence of adequate treatment — usually do much better. The commercial element in the problem is less exactingly exclusive, long as Boston has discussed the improvement of the Charles,[1] and there is needed rather a sincere resolve to improve than a discovery of means. Examples are many and interesting. Perhaps the most brilliant of the better known is found in the splendid quays and marble bridges of the Seine, at Paris. On either side, throughout its city course, the river is lined with imposing walls of masonry. Large stone platforms, connected with the street at intervals by steps and inclined roadways, serve the needs of commerce; and above, the quays, bordered on the river side by a handsome coping, afford a favorite promenade. The lead of Paris has been followed in the last few years by similar treatment of the Danube at Budapest, and of the Tiber in the reconstructed Rome; but long ago a like treatment of river-fronts had been illustrated by Pisa and Florence, for instance, on the Arno. The well-known Victoria Embankment of the Thames, in London, is a modification of the plan, considerably more elaborate, and costlier in space and money. The Embankment's generous width, the conversion of some of the reclaimed land into gardens, and the planting of rows of trees along its sides give to it a park-like appearance that bestows an almost holiday character on the skirting river, while here again the demands of navigation are satisfied by openings in the wall where stairs lead to floating piers. On the

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 299.

Embankment itself there are two sidewalks and a broad carriage-way.

But even this scheme can be hardly called complete until, beyond the splendid esplanade, there rise palatial structures worthily to frame, to close with dignity, the artificial scene. The Victoria Embankment is at its best where Somerset House defines its limit; new government buildings are adding stateliness to Rome's embankment of the Tiber; and the Seine has nowhere such urban majesty as where the Bourbon palace of the Chamber of Deputies rises on one side, on the Quai d'Orsay, while directly opposite, across the broad Place de la Concorde, stands the Ministry of Marine.

The latter structure's considerable remoteness from the river is a suggestion of the value of vista in water-front treatment. Where, as usual, the land rises slowly from the shore, an excellent opportunity is afforded for such views by the plotting, at intervals, of a broad street, or square, at right angles to the river, and terminating at the summit in a monumental structure which, in its turn, thus secures an imposing setting. Of this no better conception can be given than is afforded by a proposal that a broad new street which should connect Holborn with the Strand, in London, be extended at the one end to the Victoria Embankment and at the other cut through to the British Museum, which should crown the height.

It is to be understood, of course, that such clearly artificial treatment of a river-front, however

imposing the result of such plans as these may be,[1] must ever lack the charm of nature's gentler lines and fringing vegetation and is pardonable only as an urban necessity. The whole of the area now comprising the Victoria Embankment, for example, was formerly covered twice a day by the tide.

If it is possible, as it sometimes is, to skirt part of the river on either bank with a park, so that even in the city there may be preserved, in sem-

[1] Their union is well illustrated in the immense work recently undertaken in Budapest, where, by the energy of a mixed committee representing the national and city governments, the river was constituted the centre of activity, the municipality's prime thoroughfare, chief open space, and place of resort. A description of the work is concisely given by Dr. Albert Shaw in his *Municipal Government in Continental Europe*. He says: "Magnificent stone quays and retaining-walls were built, extending for nearly three miles on the Pest side and also for a long distance on the opposite shore. These were thrown well out, the broad channel being thus compressed somewhat to secure a clean, sweeping current. Up and down along the broad promenades facing the water have been erected palatial buildings. The quays are high, and stairs, built continuously for a long distance, lead down to the lower level of the landings, upon which the heavy traffic is confined. The rows of buildings are broken at intervals by open park spaces, in which are effectively placed the statues of various Hungarian notabilities. A number of handsome public buildings are included in the row upon the quays on the left bank, and toward the upper end of the row has been built the magnificent new Parliament house. Farther down are the National Academy, the city's so-called 'Redoute building,' the old Rathhaus (city hall), the vast new custom-house, and various other establishments." Here a more distant part of the quay is made a shady promenade where driving is prohibited.

blance at least, nature's softer treatment, the solution is happier.[1] But most commonly the necessity that determines a city's location on the sides of a navigable stream causes it to be built up closely to the water's edge; and the dreamer of fairer cities has to choose between huddled huts, sheds, and crowded warehouses, or the clear-cut lines of solid masonry. Picture, for example, the strides in civic dignity and beauty which any city on the majestic Hudson would take with nobler treatment of its river-front. Imagine State Street, in Albany, with the State capitol at its head, if it were cut through to the river with a suitable termination[2]; or viewing the panorama from the dome of St. Peter's in Rome, imagine the piazza of that church when extended to the Tiber, and the new glory that will come to the edifice.

In some of the Dutch cities, most conspicuously in Amsterdam, there is a repose and quiet stateliness in the handling of the canal problem which should have a suggestion for the small city traversed

[1] In the Report of the Metropolitan Park Commission of Boston, in 1900, the board declared that its acquirements, when added to the holdings of the local boards of Cambridge, Waltham, Newton, etc., were sufficient to reserve to the public the control of nearly all the river bank of the Charles, Neponset, and Mystic rivers within the district. "It has been the policy of the board," the Report added, "to omit from these takings important manufacturing establishments and lands likely to be required for wharves or other purposes essential to the business convenience of the community." The policy which has there been so successful should convey a practical hint.

[2] In 1912 this improvement was commenced.

by a river comparable in even flow, in placidity, and narrowness to the canals of Holland. There is no need of so formal and elaborate a treatment as in the case of the Seine and Thames where they pass through Paris and London. A wall, that may be of brick, embanks the canal; and on each side there is a broad street, with overhanging trees, and built up only on the side opposite to the canal. So the houses look at one another across the width of walk, canal, and walk; and the town seems to step back from the stream which, taking its way through field and meadow, has caught, and still holds—through the ample space the city yet affords it—the country's witching aroma of restfulness.

One hypothesis remains: the city, or that part of it, placed by sea or lake or stream with only picturesqueness to be considered; the community favored by "a beautiful situation," in which the problem is not complicated by demands of industry or commerce. There is little to be said here. Appreciation of the prospect will suggest that it be preserved, unmarred, free to all the people as far as may be, like the view from the imagined dominating hill. As a result the park or promenade is the simplest and happiest device. Because a beautiful view is apt to move individuals before the community as a whole is moved, it sometimes happens, as on the cliff at Newport for example, that such a site is early pre-empted by private owners. But even so, the community need not despair. As Chicago retains her strip of lake-front park before the

houses of the wealthy, as New York her Riverside Drive, and as, again, in Cleveland and Duluth, an individual may be moved by public spirit to donate such land to all the people for a park, so in one way or another — in a last resort by purchase, as around the falls of Niagara — it is possible as well as right for the community to secure the vantage point. Now and then, as with Fort Porter at Buffalo, and in many an old-world city, the problem is simplified because the government holds the position for defence, and allows the people to enjoy it.

No part of the discussion of civic æsthetics is more difficult in theory than this fitting adjustment of cities to their sites. Here naturalness and artificiality are directly opposed. The very considerations which determine a city's location are based on utilizing its natural features, while the influence of the æsthetic ideal is largely thrown toward preserving nature and subordinating utility to beauty.

In the building laws, in the planning of streets, it is possible to aim at the ideal; but in adjustment to site this best course is, in the main, debarred. Yet it is something to recognize what that "best" may be, and to learn that even in circumscribed areas the city may secure at least a semblance of nature by dedication of the site's best features to park purposes. After that let us learn that, if a building must occupy the crowning eminence, the structure should be one of public character, large, substantial, white, and pure; as

becomes a vision half of heaven and half of earth, with detached columns and perhaps sculptured figures standing clear against the sky. So rose the Acropolis over Athens, and the opposing temples of Jupiter and Juno on the twin heights of the Capitoline hill over the Rome of the Emperors. It is no dream. A dozen modern structures carry out the idea. Build them of dark material and they must glower heavily over the city; build them of light material, in chaste design, and their beauty is not incongruous in the ugliest industrial city. For we are learning to conquer smoke, and we see them only when we look up; when whatever sordidness yet clings to the town is left behind. There must be nothing of the earth earthy in the structure that then meets our eyes.

And finally, we learn that if commerce must rule on the city water-front, it were better that the shore line be made richly urban than allowed to become degraded nature.



CHAPTER II

THE STREET PLAN

WE shall not attain to cities and villages that are beautiful until we learn artistically to plan them. Transformations may help us greatly, as London and Paris and some examples at home show; but a mended article is never as good as one well made at first. The problem in our cities is mainly, to be sure, one of mending, but even yet it is not wholly so. A newspaper in New York, referring to local conditions, has had occasion to say in protest[1]: "The opportunity lies before us, ample and inviting, and wholly ignored. The site of a future city north of the Harlem offers a field for improvement more magnificent than that for which Nero destroyed imperial Rome. With a Haussmann or a L'Enfant in our three millions of population, the ideal city, the city beautiful and perfect, would at least be suggested, but what are we doing with it? We are plodding along on village lines, with village methods, marring with patchwork improvements that disfigure, ignoring all teachings of the past, unconscious of all the

[1] The condition has since been greatly bettered.

possibilities of the future. We are laying out the new districts of the Greater New York, not as the ideal city nor the city beautiful, nor even as a city of common sense. We are merely permitting it to grow up under the stimulus of private greed and of real estate speculation."

Notice of a city plan, then, is still pertinent, still practical. The decisions can be set aside as composing an ideal to be kept before us in the mending, or they can be used for an actual working plan in the plotting of new areas. The natural features of a site do not, as we have seen, assure a city's character; and so, with the principles set forth in the last chapter in mind for use on the occasions that they fit, we may set about consideration of the street plan little hampered by the definite peculiarities of any site — save that the village, with its shorter streets, will be mindful of the vistas. The ideal for all urban conditions has not, indeed, been discovered; but from an examination of effects actually secured in different cities, we should at least attain to underlying principles.

Significantly enough, we must make our search among modern cities; or in the modernized parts of the ancient cities. Except for Piræus, which, as the seaport of Athens, was laid out by Athenian engineers, the street plan was rarely treated with artistic regard, large outlook, and firm grasp in the cities of ancient or mediæval times. Blind, narrow, and tortuous streets were the rule in them, relieved now and then by splendid temple or palace, and noble squares. Still, the cities made much of their

sites. Piræus had a rich and rarely beautiful water-frontage, and Athens and Rome adequately crowned their heights; while it has remained for the heavy traffic of modern times, and for new principles in sanitation and philanthropy, to insist upon street reforms. Out of that insistence has grown the comparatively recent hope of one harmonious and appropriate street plan.

In Washington, Philadelphia, and a portion of Manhattan Island we have conspicuous and very convenient examples of a systematic attempt at strictly city plotting, made in advance of actual building. To the genius of L'Enfant, influenced as he no doubt was by recent transformations in Paris, is due that large part of its beauty which the city of Washington owes to its having possessed at the start an artistic plan. This plan was so complete and generous that it continued to prohibit haphazard growth. A beautiful site was given to him, and L'Enfant drew plans commensurate to the importance of a great nation's capital. They were subsequently changed somewhat and the impetus of city extension was not in the direction he anticipated, yet Washington still has, it is said, through the liberality of his design, a proportionately larger area devoted to streets, avenues, and parks than any other city in the world. The distinction of the plan, aside from the prominence it lends to the capitol, is its free use of diagonal, arterial avenues. Wrenn, futilely plotting new streets for fire-swept London, had endorsed these principles.

Some ten years after the plan of Washington had

been determined upon and mapped, the New York Street Commission was called into being. Its effort was "the first deliberate attempt" to provide for New York's expansion. Though De Witt Clinton was a member of this commission, though it faced a task of inspiring opportunity, and had the plan of the new city of Washington as an example, after due deliberation it gave the weight of its authority to the perfectly regular, or "grid-iron," system yet visible at and above Fourteenth Street. The best that can be said for the commission is that it probably allowed itself to be too much influenced by the limitations of a long and narrow island, and that, in reaction from the confusion of the lower city and of Boston, it attached too much importance to simplicity, as this had been illustrated by Penn's engineers at Philadelphia.

The events throw two leading plans for cities into sharp contrast. On the one hand, the grid-iron plan offers the maximum area for building sites and a regularity of almost childish simplicity; on the other, the diagonal avenues afford economy of communication, vistas of much possible beauty, and open squares and spaces that are grateful to the eye and of no little sanitary value. The weight of æsthetic consideration is overwhelmingly in favor of what may be called the Washington, as distinguished from the Philadelphia, or New York, plan. Sanitation recommends it; and so does convenience, since it is no slight matter that on a checker-board plotting the traveller, to reach any

destination not on his own street, must traverse two sides of a right-angled triangle.

But the New York Street Commissioners decided to leave upper Broadway and the Bowery as they were, the turnpike being already of some importance, and their gridiron plan was thus modified by a diagonal thoroughfare which offers contrasts very convenient. Imagine what it would have cost to create Union Square and Madison Square, were the area built up to-day as is the adjacent territory; and if the advantage of having these squares is not sufficiently obvious, let it be recalled that it was lately thought necessary to pass a law authorizing the city to expend a million dollars a year to create such spaces where all is now dreary monotony. So the commissioners' single concession to irregularity is proved financially as well as æsthetically worth while.

There is a third plan for city streets that circumstances have made very popular in Europe and that has much to recommend it. This is the ring, or concentric, plan. Its most distinguished exemplar is Vienna, with the famous Ring-strasse within and Gürtel-strasse (girdle street) without. The former not only contains the public buildings, which in the aggregate give to it an air of splendor, but it contains the leading houses of business and amusement. Enclosed by it is the small area of the old town, the network of highways and byways striking the Ring-strasse at forty points; without, extend fifteen main radials. The street railways, coming in by these, centre their operations on the Ring,

circling along its length until each passenger has been left at the point nearest his destination. Thus the Ring-strasse has been likened to a great receiving and distributing reservoir; but it has also a majesty that has lately rendered Vienna famous. It resembles an enormous circular stage devised for the spectacularly scenic entrance and exit of the Viennese throng. Good types, too, of this plan are the circles of "inner" and "outer" boulevards in Paris, and these illustrate well the debt to its ancient fortifications of a city that has been "modernized" by this means. For it is their destruction, and the use for boulevards of the encircling strip of public territory which has been thus secured, that gives to this system much of its European vogue. We often see it adopted, however, in the United States, where, as in Boston and Chicago for example, parks and boulevards are planned to form a circle of beauty around the city.

The briefest consideration of these three plans suggests that perhaps the best results could be obtained from their combination. If it did nothing else it would offer variety while yet avoiding confusion. And civic æsthetics dread the flaunting of systematic exactness and regularity in the street plan. The combination of plans is already accepted, practically, as the ideal by German municipalities, and Milan and Vienna are notable examples of it.

Imagine a central point, a plaza—as with happy effect in many an old-world city — or the green or

common of a village. It is a grouping spot for the public buildings, or it may be a strongly distinguished natural feature of the site, perhaps an eminence, and occasionally even the water-front. To this, numerous diagonal streets of primary importance would focus, so cutting irregularly a network of —not oblong blocks, as in New York, but even squares with access to the rear of the houses.[1] And around the outside, or at various periods, place circling parkways, or boulevards—like those, for instance, of Brussels — whence the diagonal streets may radiate. The result is a wheel, superimposed on a checker-board. The hub is the true heart of the town; the spokes are arterial thoroughfares, receiving the heaviest traffic because they are the most direct lines of communication. The rim, or rims, are boulevards and parkways, affording convenient means for belt-line intercourse. Incidentally, the vista of every street is broken at intervals, for very long street perspectives without substantial termini are not things to be desired. Unless there be plainly visible an eminence, or an architectural or sculptural mass, at the end of the street, distance becomes only wearisome.

The practical merits of this plan are well illustrated in Vienna, where the daily distribution of population is said to take place more easily than

[1] This plan of even squares has been carefully developed, as applicable to New York, by Julius F. Harder, and is set forth, with diagram and full explanation of advantages, in *Municipal Affairs*, March, 1898.

in any other large city.[1] But from the artistic standpoint only, we have here, first, the dominating central point (of site or business) putting a stamp upon the city and giving to it that distinctness that so many urban communities lack. Upon this is laid all the emphasis that street arrangement can give. Then, in the junction of diagonal streets with the parallelogram's regularity, we have at hand the appropriate sites for adornment with fountains, statues, and little parks. The problem has not been solved as if it were that of an exposition. It is a simple, practical, and systematic ground-plan available for busy city or for quiet village. Towns already under way may, indeed, require modifications of it; and a site like Manhattan Island may render the whole impractical; but it is helpful to have clearly in view a general, ideal scheme and its advantages.

In the treatment of details these principles will be serviceable. Indianapolis, with several diagonal streets focussing toward a center, has been called a well-planned city for America, where most cities have grown from villages whose one distinctive feature is a broad main street, long and straight, and absorbing all the business. The Washington Arch in New York would sink into insignificance compared with the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, were the question only one of situation. For the latter, on its eminence, is renamed the

[1] Another interesting, because distinctly philanthropic, use of this plan is illustrated in the Bethnal Green improvement in London.

Arch of the Star, since from it as centre radiate twelve streets, three of them more than a hundred metres broad, seven more than a thousand metres long, and five offering a clear view of more than an English mile. The arrangement has been named "the stateliest in any capital." So in other mere details the principles of the plan may be successfully applied when the scheme as a whole is impractical.[1] A number of streets may focus, for instance, to a little park or square on which is the railroad station, as at Providence; or a public building, as at Washington; or there may be a broad encircling street almost in the heart of the town, as at Carlsruhe. Even where important streets cross at right angles the point of juncture may be given advantageously a circular treatment, with arcs either convex or concave. The one is exemplified by the "circuses" of London; the other, less attractive on paper, gives, in the series of outward curving arcs, a better architectural opportunity, and accommodates as large a traffic with economy in building space.

The grouping of public buildings may be properly considered under street plans. It is not with-

[1] A subject for discussion at meetings of the Architectural League of New York has been "The Reconstruction of the City Plan," and the speakers have given special attention to the creation of a "civic centre," and to worthy approaches to new bridges. Throughout, the principles given here were considered fundamental, and the projects are mainly of interest as illustrating their application of the principles to particular cases.

out many illustrations, especially in Europe, where castle, duomo, and perhaps court-theatre are frequently neighbors. The structures may be gathered around a central square, as — let us say — in Venice; they may line the river, as in Paris; they may glorify a single short street, as in Berlin. In any case, aside from securing a centre for the public business, each imposing structure adds dignity to the others, and merely by the concentration the public business assumes a visible importance that it could not have were the buildings for its transaction scattered.

In the United States this result has been seldom gained. The public buildings are representative of at least three landlords, the city, county, and national governments, and these rarely consult with each other in the choice of their own sites. As a consequence, the post office rises in one place, the court-house in another, the city hall in yet a third. Each loses in dignity through the crowding about it of commercial structures. The city is robbed of definite centre, nor is there a spot that beyond all rivalry attracts to itself æsthetic street adornment and gives to it unquestionable appropriateness. In Cleveland, however, a very rare opportunity lately arose for putting this group plan into operation, and it has been worthily embraced. The construction was contemplated, almost simultaneously, of a public library, a chamber of commerce, a city hall, a post office, and a court-house. After years of discussion and earnest agitation, the group plan has been formally adopted, and

a site has been chosen on the lake-front for the buildings. In the course of a few years, therefore, we may look for a very notable example of this plan in an American city. It happens in this case that the principal railroad station will be near the group of public buildings and a happy opportunity can be improved to give to the city a worthy land and lake portal.

Indeed, in an ideal city plan, a railroad station would be dignified and emphasized. It need hardly be said that streets should focus to it, and a suggestion that in the modern city the railroad station has "replaced the gate of the feudal walled city" has behind it a degree of sense to which an architectural and topographical expression might well be given. As a rule villages are more scrupulous in this regard than are cities.

In a city's outlying territory, where a natural focus should be found in the suburban station, differences in street plan are rather of degree than of kind. Economy in building area is less imperative, and the streets may thus be broader. On the other hand, the accommodations for traffic do not have to be liberal, so that we are free to provide for a park-like treatment on the wide streets, and at points of intersection, especially where acute angles suggest a pushing back of the building line, to arrange in the plan for small parks, circles, and squares. In this case the slowly curving "Ringstrasse" may wisely be treated as a park road.

We are dealing here, however, only with the plan,

not with the adornment of the streets. If it is true of compactly built-up city areas, it must be yet more emphatically true of recently annexed, or outlying, city territory, that it is not too late to consider so fundamental a matter even as its mapping. New suburban areas are constantly laid out, and receive constantly more serious thought for their treatment as a harmonious whole. "We buy the land by the acre and sell it by the lot," epitomizes a familiar operation in suburban real estate, and reveals at once the opportunity for æsthetic plotting which is one secret of success in selling. The thing, then, for the city to do, is to see that the acres are brought into harmony with each other as well as the lots, that all areas are made to conform with the one general plan for the whole suburban property.

Trite as this seems, it is repeatedly ignored, where cities have so many other interests that they forget their fringing outskirts. There result those unplanned, bedraggled suburbs which make so dreary an approach to great cities—to London and New York, for example—just where the city should be blending with the country pleasantly, in broad and shady streets, garden lined, with every vantage-point of site made much of. The comfort is, that here and there thought is turning to the suburbs while yet there is time; and by the reclaiming of scattered areas, or by the planning of new districts from the very start with artistic purpose — as with Garden City and Tuxedo Park, New York, or in the design for Berkeley neighborhood, California—

is teaching by successful example a moving lesson. Some Western States, indeed, learning from the experience of the East, have now passed laws regulating the survey of outlying areas, with a view to probable urban absorption at last; and the mayor of Philadelphia in his message in 1900 urged strongly that æsthetic foresight be shown in the planting of new streets in the undeveloped portions of the city.

Aside from new undertakings, much is still accomplished, moreover, in the very heart of cities, where streets which have been long established have become inadequate to the demands of traffic, or incompatible with the modern ideas of sanitation. Whole districts have been razed in London, Paris, Rome, and a score of smaller cities, to make way for new streets and plazas built on a system of hygienic and æsthetic merit, or to serve as arteries for vastly increased traffic. The method of procedure, whether by the municipality or a private corporation, is often of large interest and might perhaps be studied profitably here. But the undertakings in which these reformers, corporate or municipal, become landlords on an extensive scale, reimbursing themselves, in part at least, by the increased value of the building property, are too complex to be concisely handled. And unless made in detail the study would be of little value[1] to us; for as yet such enterprises in this country

[1] Those interested can find exhaustive treatment of the subject in city documents or in periodical literature, and excellent

have been pushed more modestly, and have been due mainly to private initiative.

Yet, during the first decade of the twentieth century—since this volume was first issued—the movement made big strides in the United States. When the second decade began, city planning had become the subject of national conferences; the universities were opening courses in it; and no city but was influenced by the demand for a more scientific platting of its streets—that the ends of efficiency as well as beauty might be served. An account of the principles underlying saner methods of street platting may be found in the author's later volume, *The Width and Arrangement of Streets.* It is impossible here, in a paragraph, to more than note that there has risen a new profession, of city planning—fraught with tremendous promise for the improvement of cities and towns.

Thus is it claimed that there may be serious thought of the street plans of cities. Now, if ever, is it pertinent to measure the relative merits of the diagonal, gridiron, and circular systems, or the advantages of their combination. It is not too late to discover what principles for the attainment of city beauty may be gained from each. Even in Paris the streets that now radiate so magnificently from the Arc de l'Étoile were not opened until years after the arch had been erected.

résumés in Dr. Shaw's volumes on *Municipal Government in Great Britain* and *in Continental Europe.*

When we have learned the science of street planning; when we are plotting new territories on an artistic and harmonious system, or are making our changes in existing streets with such a scheme in mind, doubtless there will also be paid more conscientious heed to nomenclature. On the one hand, we shall take care to avoid the hopelessly prosaic numerical and alphabetical systems of New York, Chicago, and Washington. Such merits as they have are somewhat akin to those which belong to, and explain, the custom of numbering the convicts in large prisons; but those merits would not excuse us for designating the world's poets and artists, its fair women, and our children in that way. On the other hand, we shall doubtless avoid cumbrous titles, as those now held by such streets as (in Paris) the Rue du Quatre Septembre. But within reasonable bounds we shall not suppress whatever is characteristic, individual, of local color. We shall cherish that, although it lead us to the long list of State-named avenues in Washington, to the strange names of some London streets, or to New Orleans's quaint use of such abstractions as Virtue, Law, Industry, and Pleasure as street names, even to the suffrance of a Goodchildren Street. We shall rise above the feeble wit that makes "Main Street" designate a leading thoroughfare, seeing in the opportunity to name our streets a chance to write and preserve local history and tradition, to honor with so constant a reminder the names of men and women of distinction, and to record the community's ideals, its admiration,

and its progress. There are no lasting monuments that are cheaper, more distinctly popular and obvious, than street names. Then we may group these designations, as Paris does, so that the name of a scholar will indicate one district; the name of a soldier another; the reminder of an event a third. Or we may divide the municipal area into quadrants and suffix, as in London, the initials of the quadrant of the compass to the street name. We do not need numbers for the designation of locality.

And two things as to nomenclature will be settled definitely, by law: street names will be made much more difficult to change than now; and street, avenue, boulevard, place, and square will have each its precise definition which will render the application of the term a question not of sentiment but of condition.



CHAPTER III

THE ELEMENTARY CONSTRUCTION

WHEN we have duly considered the natural features of a city's site, determined its centre of business, and plotted its streets and avenues, the question of actual construction presents itself. Perhaps our streets cross streams, and we must build bridges. At all events, the streets must be paved, and the pavements cared for; they must be lighted; wires for lighting, telegraph, telephone, and fire alarm must be disposed of; buildings must be erected with regard to safety and appearance; perhaps there are glaring advertisements to be controlled, and clouds of black smoke to be suppressed. The best planned city, for the problems presented here are far more typically urban than rural, would be hideous if the care stopped with the planning.

The effects to be secured group themselves readily into two classes of effort: by creation, as paving, lighting, etc.; and by suppression or repression.

In the creative group, we may first consider bridges. The point to be made is very simple,

but it is strangely novel. It is that a bridge is so conspicuous and monumental a structure that we should not be satisfied merely with durability and strength, but should demand that to these be added fitness, grace, and beauty. A bridge has been in course of construction across the Thames, in London. The County Council was the constructor and provided the design. Against the latter's engineering features there were no protests, but criticism of the structure on æsthetic grounds was violent and authoritative. The council asked the Royal Institute of British Architects, which had come into the discussion, to furnish a new design. It did so, using the engineering features of the first. The result was that the engineer himself made another and better drawing, and London was saved from an eye-sore that would have been conspicuous for generations. The true story may be treated as a universal fable, and its outcome suggests a remedy.

Let the city accept no design for a bridge until an artistic authority has passed upon the structure's proposed appearance. The charter of New York city provides for an Art Commission to whom shall be submitted for approval before acceptance all "works of art." Then it adds, that "when so requested by the mayor or the municipal assembly" it may have a like veto power over bridges, public buildings, "or other structures of a permanent character intended for ornament or commemoration." The new charter of Baltimore, in also providing for a Municipal Art Commission, declares

that at the request of the mayor or council the commission shall "give its advice as to the suitability of the design of any public building, bridge, or other structure." There are art commissions in other cities, and always art authorities, so that the step advocated is simple. Indeed, when engineers were lately invited to submit competitive plans for a memorial bridge across the Potomac at Washington, each was required to select an architect who should prepare his plans with him.

But simple and reasonable as æsthetic protection is, how little, on the whole, it has been made use of! Seldom has any city offered such bridge opportunities as New York; but the only structure of this kind, of which it is really and artistically proud, is the Washington Bridge. The most conspicuous one, as this book is written (the Brooklyn Bridge) is impressive in its span and in its metal work; but of its looming towers no man feels proud. Yet the initial projects for the new East River bridges do not indicate that its lesson has been laid to heart. Their approaches promise, indeed, to have that adequate dignity that will render them less incidental and dwarfing than are those of the Brooklyn Bridge, but the official conception of the structures seems yet to be that they are merely subjects for engineering. Could any conception of so striking a feature of the landscape be as false as that?[1] It would represent, were the artistic and industrial spirits antithetical, the victory of the latter; but the industrial can never be finally triumphant until it has made the artistic its ally.

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 299.

In the submission of bridge designs to æsthetic criticism, we have only negative, or protective, effort. It may save us from something radically bad; but we are to desire something radically good. The most obvious way to secure this would be by the construction of a bridge of which the purely utilitarian purpose should be not a whit more pronounced than the purely artistic. In classic times the Romans sometimes constructed a bridge to commemorate an historic event. The thing has been done from time to time through all the centuries, until now the grandest bridge in Paris is the Alexander III., commemorating a visit from the Czar and designed in its details by prominent sculptors. In the United States a project is under discussion for a memorial bridge at Washington that shall be very prominent in the new plans to make the capital beautiful. At Hartford, Conn., the soldiers' monument takes the form of a memorial bridge. Monumental structures have been built across the Charles at Boston; and it might often happen that with financial, as well as striking æsthetic, advantage a bridge made beautiful could be substituted for the usual sculptured group or monolith.

But relatively such structures must be rare. The greater number of bridges will always be erected merely to carry the traffic of the street over the stream. The Ponte Vecchio in Florence, which does this with houses on either side of it so that the traveller can scarcely tell that the river is below him, played perfectly its part from that point of

view. But a better appreciation of the worth in a city's heart of God's unimprisoned sunshine, of open space, and free air currents, suggests that the chance afforded by the bridging of a river be made use of, if any natural beauty yet pertain to stream or banks. Accordingly it would seem that from the æsthetic standpoint, when a bridge is designed merely to be the extension of a street, or the connecting link of its parts, with no artistic message of its own to deliver, that bridge were best — most suitable and beautiful—which carries out most perfectly the idea of the street, minus enclosing buildings. This is a conspicuous merit of some of the bridges of Paris. At the street's level, of precisely equal width to it, similarly paved and flagged, and obtruding no break in the vista, we have, viewed from its approaches, not so plainly a bridge as a space of glorified street where, for a little distance, there are no buildings, where the lights are somewhat more ornate, where rests are cut in the broad stone coping, and perhaps sculpture marks the beginning and end of the short — one nearly says "plaza." If from the river view also the bridge be satisfactory, harmonizing — as it is apt to do — with worthy treatment of the banks, and joining in itself strength and grace and dignity, we have the ideal structure of its kind. Happily, the type is becoming constantly more common and one does not need to seek Paris to find it.

Unconscious appreciation of this principle is doubtless at the root of the dissatisfaction at the appearance of the great Tower Bridge, in London;

and it casts the weight of its influence against "overhead" works or braces anywhere, even in little bridges, when they can be there discarded.[1]

To recapitulate, then, the bridge that does most for a city's beauty is ordinarily that which is least a bridge and most a glorified space of street. When high banks or demands of navigation require a more conspicuous structure the design, however perfect in engineering features, should be subject to artistic criticism; and finally the occasion must sometimes arise when a bridge may be made a positive and striking part of a city's adornment.

The subject of street paving may be properly said to belong to this section of municipal creation. The subject is a broad one, upon which a great deal of technical writing has been done. In fact, it is mainly technical, for to say that city beauty requires good paving is almost axiomatic, and the question at once resolves itself into what "good" pavement is, the answer varying with neighborhood, even with latitude and longitude, and according to the traffic. Doubtless it is because pavements have to be selected so largely with reference to their traffic burdens, to considerations

[1] In the cities along the Erie Canal in New York State, the "lift" bridge is common, *i. e.*, a bridge which rises to permit the passage of boats beneath it. Formerly, the greater part of the machinery which raised the bridge was above ground. Of late it has been sometimes placed in chambers underground, with the result that the superstructure is entirely done away with and that the justice of the contention made here has an humble, but excellent, illustration.

financial, hygienic, and even climatic, that their æsthetic importance is so frequently ignored. That scarcely requires more, however, than that the pavement be even, and that it be clean.

It is worth while to note that almost simultaneously with the new and urgent demand that cities be made more wholesome, dignified, and handsome there has come the discovery of that commercially available asphaltum, and the art of preparing it for paving, which have done so much to bring about just these results. Probably few persons realize how great has been the recent advance in this department of urban development. For, without regard merely to the use of asphalt, it is not too much to say that in most cities of the United States far the greater portion of improved pavements has been laid since 1880.

No longer ago than 1855, the standard type of pavement in New York was the cobblestone, and even that was a luxury mainly confined to the lower part of the city. Now public opinion permits only its occasional use in an alley, and in some cities—as in Baltimore, for example—paving with cobblestones is prohibited by law, like murder, theft, and drunkenness. The first asphalt pavement was put down in Washington in 1878. A year later New York tried one little block of it in front of a hotel as an experiment, and it was 1888 before a considerable stretch of the new pavement was ventured. Then it was laid on ten blocks of Madison Avenue. In Indianapolis the Commercial Club, formed for the purpose of securing improve-

ment in the public work, with a thousand members, held in 1890 a Paving Exposition. This was the first of its kind, but it attracted more than five hundred official representatives of other American cities.

With the more urgent desire for urban regeneration, with the recognition of the asphalt's hygienic value in the poorer districts, with the bicycle and automobile, there has come an insistent demand for improvement until whole streets and districts have been newly paved. In some cases the street car companies are called upon to do this work in the streets they traverse, and nearly always they are compelled to assist largely in the expense of it; but the cities themselves have lately paid out great sums in paving (in New York an average of $2,000,000 a year merely for asphalt after 1895 being considered not excessive). The result is that, with the sums to be spent for water, sewerage, etc., they have little money to spare in more direct and obviously artistic self-adornment. This has been sometimes deplored; but it is doubtful if, with artistic purpose only, they could, at the commoner American stage of development, have expended a like sum to better artistic purpose than in good paving. And if we can look forward to the day when, the great burden of elementary construction over, the cities will have larger sums at hand to spend for beauty, we may know that the progress toward the new municipal art will have been logical. For it is far better, and safer for its continuance, that we pass from costly pavements to costly sculp-

ture, that we progress from pure water to pure art, than that the order be reversed.

The assertion is not made that the asphalt is always preferable. Not only may a better pavement be yet discovered; but there are places where the wooden or granite block, brick, or macadam is to be chosen over asphalt without a moment's hesitation. The point is only that good paving is a *sine qua non* of city, and even of village, beauty, and that it is foolishness to-day to talk of statues and fountains and lovely vistas if the streets be poorly paved.

Having put a good pavement down, the next requisite is to keep it in repair and keep it clean. The common American custom is to wait until the whole pavement goes to pieces (which means to let it go to pieces) and then to lay a new one. The European usage is to keep repairing all the time; whenever a foot of pavement is broken to repair that foot. All the advantages, financial, æsthetic, and in the convenience of traffic, are with the latter system. The frequent practice of requiring a guaranty for a term of years from the contractor who lays an expensive pavement is gradually, however, if indirectly, leading American cities into this better method of procedure. For such action also the automobile is exerting tremendous influence.

As to cleaning the pavements, that department of urban administration has been long a reproach to American cities. But the question has not been, on the part of taxpayers, one of dollars, or

of sense; the department has failed in its work because it has been considered the fair prey of politics. Dirty politics have failed steadily to relieve dirty streets. Until we can think of street cleaning as a business, not a political, operation we may look in vain for beautiful cities.

The value of street cleaning is æsthetic as well as hygienic. But for practical purposes of administration it is treated under one or the other head, as if it belonged in that sphere alone. In Glasgow, for instance, the cleaning of the streets is grouped with the inspection of houses, the collection of garbage, etc., as a part of the sanitary government. With us, and more commonly on the Continent, it is a service by itself, with the æsthetic purpose predominant. The history of the street cleaning effort in Paris is illuminating from this point of view. Originally the law required each resident to sweep his share of the street, that part of it which lay in front of the premises he occupied, just as we now take care of our sidewalks. In 1853, when modern Paris was beginning to appear out of the maze of street reforms, a new rule required the thorough cleansing every day of the public roads; but that the rule might not lay too onerous a burden, the city undertook to care for the sweeping of the squares and the middle strip of the broad avenues. Little by little, individuals then began to adopt the plan of making a money payment as an inducement to the administration to do their sweeping for them, and finally, by 1873, the government actually found itself doing half the street cleaning of Paris.

It then became clear that a uniform municipal service would be popular, more economical, and more efficient, and a law was enacted changing the citizen's old-time obligation into a direct tax.

In the United States, we have started with this tax and so in the main have lacked the sense of vivid, personal interest in the results; we talk about "systems" and vast undertakings, and forget that individually we have merely hired the city to keep clean our own small bit of road. Next to "political methods," that loss by the private citizens of a sense of personal responsibility is probably the greatest cause for inefficiency in our street cleaning. It may be that we shall have to go back to the system with which Paris started—"begin all over again," as children say—before we can attain to that official conscientiousness which is so largely based on fear of private criticism.

There are always some in the community who are exacting, who will be satisfied with the performance of nothing less than its full duty by the branch of the city government in whose operation they feel special interest. This branch has been more and more of late the department of street cleaning, since the rise of the new ideal of city life. Every expensive pavement enlists more champions to the cause of clean pavements, and together these desiderata so underlie all claims to city beauty that a good deal of the whole municipal art movement's enthusiasm has been absorbed by them. And very properly has it been, for as a man is judged by his linen, so a city must submit to the stamp that its

streets put upon it. From this scattered awakening of a personal sense of responsibility many very interesting and helpful voluntary movements have arisen. It will be profitable to observe three types.

In 1897, the Merchants' Association of San Francisco had 915 business firms on its roll of members. To keep them and the public generally familiar with the work and aims of the association an eight-page paper was started, containing original articles and editorials on municipal questions. No advertisements were admitted, and five thousand[1] copies a month were distributed freely. The cleaning of the streets was the first subject of agitation. Preliminary plans were prepared for an improved method of street cleaning, and then the association offered to see to the cleaning of any block within a certain district if the merchants of that block would subscribe at a rate of not more than ten cents a day for a frontage of twenty-five feet. Subscriptions flowed in, and the plan was a success. Thus encouragement was given for undertaking the city contract, as an object-lesson. A very low bid induced the Board of Supervisors to award the contract to the association's president. Its directors became his bondsmen, and the work was planned and managed by its officers. To insure success, $30,000 was raised by voluntary subscription to add to the contract price, and the work was triumphantly carried through. At the approach of the contract's expiration, plans and specifications for a continuance of the system were prepared. These

[1] In 1902 the membership had risen to over 1300, and the edition of the paper to 10,000.

the city authorities adopted. The case is an interesting example of a return to the original Parisian theory of individual obligation as antecedent to a successful municipal service. In Chicago the municipal committee of the Civic Federation, undertaking street cleaning in the business district, did so with the purpose, successfully accomplished, of showing that the city had been paying too high a price. In Cincinnati more recently the Business Men's Club maintained for some months a band of white-clothed street sweepers to show the value of a uniformed service.

Such are types of voluntary effort to improve efficiency undertaken by the citizens. There may now be added to them an example so often paralleled that it is scarcely fair to seem to limit it by the designation of a city. This is the work done for clean streets by women's clubs. Yet, that a specific example may give definite encouragement, let us note the small Civic Club in Hartford, Conn. It had informal origin at a luncheon, where the women were discussing the dirty streets. Those present effected an organization, limited its membership to 150, and set out to see what woman's interest could do toward cleaning the city. It was resolved that the club should be conservative, and as a result of maintaining perfectly friendly relations with the municipal boards it has done much merely by suggestions. The club addressed letters to property-holders, requesting co-operation; it induced the city to furnish cans for waste at the corners of the streets, and to make the scattering

of papers or refuse a punishable offence. A school league was then formed, before the movement had been generally inaugurated, and Hartford streets became conspicuously clean. In Lowell, Mass., the Middlesex Club printed and distributed portions of the city ordinances relating to street cleaning, so illustrating a quieter form of club interest. Nor need women act in groups to be of service. The Civic Federation of Chicago employed a woman as one of its inspectors of the streets. Subsequently (in 1897), in deference to the vigilance of which she was the representative, she was appointed city inspector of streets and alleys. She was the pioneer woman in such an official position, and performed her work so well as to give the authority of successful experience to the theoretical argument that because women clean houses they are fitted to clean cities. A woman's qualification for the place of street commissioner, however, should properly depend, not on her experience in wielding a broom, but on the possession of executive ability.

The third type of movement, inaugurated by the stirring of the popular conscience against official dereliction, shall be political. It is the quick and striking advance which was secured in New York under the late Colonel Waring. In 1888, only 53 miles of paved streets in the city were cleaned daily. In 1896–97, under the reform administration, 433 miles were gone over from one to five times a day and kept clean. After the famous March blizzard of 1888, when the resources of the

old department were taxed to their utmost to remove the snow, 40,542 loads were carted away. In the winter of 1896–97, after each considerable snowstorm 200,000 loads were removed, and in one day a fourth as many loads again as in the whole week after the blizzard. Moreover, 2000 men, who had no pride in their work, had been converted into a uniformed army of 2500 who were proud of their work, and who were sure of their positions as long as they were efficient. All difficulties were arranged by arbitration; the pay of the sweepers had been advanced from $600 to $720 a year; and thousands of school children had been enlisted in Juvenile Street Cleaning Leagues, in which they were taught the first lessons of civic æsthetics. When Colonel Waring's work was done, he compiled from his reports a book that was widely read,[1] and he came into constant demand as an after-dinner speaker and a lecturer. By the seemingly lowly path of street cleaning he attained to national respect and honor.

So the question of street cleaning is a simpler matter in this development of beautiful cities than at first it seemed. The thing that counts is not how streets are cleaned, but that they are clean. Glasgow cleans her streets in one way, Paris hers in another, Munich (where the entire burden is still left with the householders[2]) has yet a third

[1] *Street Cleaning and the Disposal of a City's Wastes*, by George E. Waring.

[2] With the result that nearly all of the work is done by contractors, who are employed and paid by private individuals.

way, New York has a fourth, and there are other systems. One way only leads surely to efficiency, and that is by the creation of a popular demand that the streets be clean. This is unquestionably growing with the growth of an æsthetic ideal for cities, and with the recognition that no dream of a fair city is practical to-day if the city be not veined by smooth, clean pavements. A statue in a sea of mud is as ill-chosen an ornament as were diamonds on a beggar.

Because street cleaning is not merely an early and a necessary step in the logical development of civic æsthetics, but is also of value for educational influence in establishing the ideal of city beauty, there is value in the act of making pavements clean as well as in their cleanliness. The use of waste cans, for instance, at periods along the curb is even less to be commended on account of the considerable deposits made in them than for their constant reminder that the street is not a proper receptacle for rubbish. As in the case of the Juvenile Street Cleaning Leagues, the work done is less important than the ideal created.

Beautiful cityhood, partaking of the nature of a work of art, should certainly bear as little as possible the marks of its making, and the ideal would consist in having no cleaning done that is apparent. The very best measure is the restrictive, which prohibits the distribution of fly-sheets and circulars at door-steps, and requires loads of ashes, dirt, etc., to be some inches below the sideboards of carts. In the work that yet remains, the means should be

held of like æsthetic importance with the result. For this reason there can be approval of night work, and the late experiment of clothing the street cleaners in a neat white uniform is commendable. It dignifies the work and the workman. The respect of the laborer for himself, and of others for him, is increased when he is, somewhat more obviously than even the mayor himself, an employee of the municipality. So he does his work better, and the general lesson contained in the mere circumstance of the city's requiring his labor is the better learned. Beyond this gain, the street itself profits by the substitution of a company of uniformed workmen for a motley gang of laborers in dirty, ragged clothing.[1] It was Colonel Waring's experiment to put the street cleaners in uniform and to create an *esprit de corps*. The first, which was the easiest part of this task, has since been pretty widely taken up in the United States. In behalf of the latter undertaking rather more might be done than is. Perhaps it might be well to identify cleaner and area, and to offer individual rewards for the work best performed throughout

[1] In this connection it may be interesting further to remark that it has been the custom of the street car company in Munich to employ, in the cleaning of the tracks and the space between them (for the cleanliness of which the company is held responsible), sturdy young women who are distinguished by uniform hats. One scarcely need add that a certain æsthetic advantage in this plan is offset in an American's view by the discomfort of seeing women so employed. In Paris, also, women are sometimes included in the municipal street cleaning forces.

the year. It need hardly be added that what is said in behalf of the appearance of the laborers applies as well to the rest of the plant, to the horses and carts. And what is urged for the cleanliness of the road must be doubly urged in behalf of the sidewalk. It ought to be clean and unobstructed. Wagons should not be stored in the road, nor goods shown nor boxes stored on the sidewalk.

In this chapter we shall not pause long on the subject of street lighting. Discussion of the apparatus belongs in another place, and we have only to point out that the progress of invention and discovery which, by rapid transit and improved pavements, has so singularly favored of late an increase of urban attractiveness, has done quite as much in the direction of street lighting. From the individual lantern to the public and permanent oil lamp, from oil to gas, and then to electricity and the Welsbach burner is a record of progress that need only be named when other requirements compel the æsthetic ideal to be the brilliancy of day. The movement through invention is steadily toward greater light. Garishness has resulted now and then, but it has been by private extravagance supplementing, for its own ends, the public lighting. As far as the city's street lights are concerned, a *ville lumière* is still the goal, and one that is far more easily accessible now than ever before.

Into this question the matter of public or private ownership does not enter here. Even with private ownership the rule in the United States, there is

evident with us no niggardliness in this respect. Like Paris, our cities take unconsciously the point of view regarding all the streets that the authorities of Berlin had occasion to put into words some years ago regarding the Unter den Linden. The question had arisen as to whether that thoroughfare, which had previously been poorly lighted, should be provided with improved gas jets or with electricity — the latter being the more expensive. The authorities decided in favor of electricity, accompanying the decision with an explanation which declared, among other things, that the street deserved it as a "popular promenade," for its "æsthetic import," and because it was "the centre of festal joy on all holidays." So the proper tendency is increasingly toward regard for the street not merely as a passage of communication, but, in at least leading thoroughfares, as a *Salon de Réunion*, a *Salon des Fêtes*, to be made as bright and gay at night when work is done as it is convenient by day. This is a long step in æsthetic progress. The original conception of street lighting classed it as merely incidental to police service, as a means to public safety.

If a few practical and elementary steps in city building have seemed to require here an undue space, and if it is thought that bridges, paving, cleaning, and lighting might be taken for granted, let it be said in extenuation that in just these things is the triumph of the modern city, is the basis of the belief that when it shall wake to artistic con-

sciousness, and arouse itself fully to artistic effort, it will surpass any city that has ever been. For indispensable as these things now seem to city beauty, they have not always appeared so.

Mommsen, in speaking of the Rome of Julius Cæsar, whom he calls "the sole creative genius produced by Rome and the last produced by the ancient world," says: "Nothing was done for the regulation of the Tiber, excepting that they caused the only bridge, with which they still made shift, to be constructed of stone at least as far as the Tiber island. As little was done toward the levelling of the city on the seven hills, except where perhaps the accumulation of rubbish had effected some improvement. The streets ascended and descended narrow and angular, and were wretchedly kept; the footpaths were small and ill-paved. The ordinary houses were built of bricks negligently, and to a giddy height. . . . Like isolated islands amidst this sea of wretched buildings were seen the splendid palaces of the rich." That is the noble Rome to which Cæsar came, and which he tried to improve somewhat by requiring householders to put the streets in repair and to pave their footpaths with hewn blocks, and by issuing "appropriate enactments regarding the carrying of litters and the driving of wagons, which, from the nature of the streets, were only allowed to move freely through the capital in the evening and by night." And crossing the long line of centuries, to the greatest city of modern times, we find this said of London, by Dr. Shaw:

"Underground sewers were entirely unknown in London until 1831, and they were not numerous or extensive in 1855. Not a single large underground main had been constructed at this last date. Such as they were, the sewer and drainage ditches poured their pollution directly into the Thames at frequent intervals on both banks, and at times the river was so befouled and clogged with filth that navigation was obstructed. . . . There was not in all London at that time a good pavement, nor a broad, convenient thoroughfare." If we have changed all this, if we have gone to first principles and have learned to consider essential what was so considered in no great city of the past, surely we have won a great victory for civic beauty and splendor. And we have won it so recently that we may still be pardoned for talking of it.



CHAPTER IV

SUPPRESSION AND REPRESSION

AS we trace the rise of the effort toward fairer cityhood, it is clear that we cross an important line when we pass from the group of creative enterprises, in the elementary construction, to those that are repressive. In the building of bridges, in the paving, cleaning, and lighting of streets, thoughts of urban beauty are, or easily may be, incidental to other desires. In the burial of wires, in the suppression of smoke, in certain building regulations, and in the control of advertisements, civic æsthetics, if still an incidental motive, are not as obviously so. Now and again they rise to such equality with the demands of public safety, health, or comfort, as to be given even a like importance in all pleas for these improvements. We have passed from a group in which regard for municipal art is by general consent a subordinate factor, to one in which it may stand at the head of the column.

Of these various restrictive measures, the burial of wires is perhaps done least obviously with the æsthetic intent. And yet, clear as is the menace

of their web in case of fire, or the danger of electric shock as long as "live" wires are where an accident may toss them to the street, these real perils are referred to no more commonly than is the detraction of their mesh to city beauty. The problem is one that has arisen lately with the electric light and fire alarm, the telegraph, telephone, and trolley, and it is highly to the credit of builders of cities that the first rush to overhead construction was checked as promptly as it was. The municipality, in the old world or the new, that does not own a subway in at least its business section, or insist upon subway construction as a condition to the private corporation's franchise, is already out of date.

The time when there was most reason to dread overhead wire construction in cities undoubtedly went by with the popular amazement at the inventions; now that we take the latter as a matter of course, the beauty of streets has little to fear from the planting of poles and the stringing of wires. Even the persistent threat of the overhead trolley is less positive since the underground system is proved practical, and in the meantime brackets on the buildings are sometimes substituted for trolley poles. In residence sections, where wire conduits are not always practicable, public service wires are now often carried in alleys or along the back lines of the lots.

Municipal vigilance is not yet, of course, all it should be, especially in outlying areas. But the trend seems to be in the right direction. A city is

now held most progressive when it shows the fewest wires, not when it presents their greatest network.

In solving problems of smoke suppression the advance is not so plain, either in the United States or in England. How largely this may be due to lack of popular confidence in the complete efficiency of any "consumer" in the market would be an interesting question. Probably that factor is important. Were we sure that the smoke nuisance could be suppressed as certainly as the overhead wire evil, and at a permanent loss to the manufacturers no greater than that involved by the installation of a consuming plant, we should probably insist that it be suppressed with at least the eagerness that we demand the burial of the wires. On paper, indeed, the latter demand seems far the greater. But when the question narrows itself, in popular opinion, to an insistence upon smoke consumers that do not fully consume, or to complete prohibition of the creation of smoke when there is a notion that smoke means industry—with the certainty that industry means wealth and wealth means civic progress—municipal art is apt to be over-indulgent to one of its greatest foes. A city suffers pennants of black smoke to fly from its tall chimneys much as a national flag of bad design and homely color may be used for "decoration," not because it has or can lend beauty, but because it stands for various pleasant things of a different sort.

That position is taken very commonly. In one of the most progressive cities in the United States

the question of smoke suppression was agitated earnestly in 1898 by a few citizens who had the beauty of the city at heart. There was an ordinance on the subject, but its provisions were not enforced. In the height of the discussion a conservative newspaper, which is usually on the side of real progress, came out with the leading editorial devoted to this subject. The caption of the article was, "Watch our Smoke!" and the article began: "The good people of B—— are anxious to make it an object for manufacturers to invest and operate here. They will stand any amount of smoke if it comes from chimneys of buildings where men and women are earning good wages." The agitation failed.

When one considers the simple directness of such appeals, and the weight of personal influence brought to bear in their behalf in council chamber, in social circles, in the newspapers themselves, by those to whom the difference between soft and hard coal may mean business existence, wonder ceases that the progress has yet been so little. As a matter of fact, however, few manufacturing communities where the smoke nuisance has existence, in the United States or in England, lack a restrictive ordinance.[1] Sometimes it requires the use of an officially approved smoke consumer. Sometimes it attempts a pitiful compromise by designating a certain number of minutes in each hour during which black smoke will be suffered to pour from the chimneys. But the trouble is not so much with

[1] An interesting State law was adopted in Missouri in 1901.

the nominal requirements of the ordinance as with its enforcement.[1] Even when, as during several recent years in a suburb of Manchester, England, some public-spirited citizen repeatedly brings suit to enforce the law in a particular case, the penalty imposed is inadequately small. The manufacturer pays the fine willingly as the price of continuing his use of the cheaper coal. Under such circumstances the reformer finds his task expensive and discouraging.

Nevertheless, voluntary societies for the abatement of the smoke nuisance do appear in various cities, and societies of general purpose, like the Citizens' Association of Chicago, take it up as a portion of their work, in interesting evidence of their conscientiousness and courage. There is a strong society for the purpose in New York, and in London at the end of 1898 a Coal Smoke Abatement Society was organized under the presidency

[1] A good illustration of the insincerity of many of the ordinances on this subject is afforded by the applicable sections (23, 24) of the London Public Health Act, 1891. These make it unlawful to use any furnace which is not so constructed as to consume its own smoke, or negligently to use such a furnace, imposing a fine of £5 on conviction for a first offence and doubling the fine for each successive conviction. Then the ordinance explains that the words, "consume or burn the smoke" shall not mean "consume or burn all the smoke," and the fine may be remitted if the magistrate considers that the offender has so constructed his furnace as to consume or burn, as far as possible, all the smoke arising from such furnace; and has carefully attended to the same, and consumed or burned, as far as possible, the smoke arising from such furnace. (Sub-section 4.)

of Sir W. B. Richmond. It started with a long list of titled names on its committee. Its purpose is to enforce the existing laws and to secure more stringent measures, to learn what is done in other cities to abate the nuisance, and finally, and this perhaps is its wisest move, it seeks to promote the knowledge of methods by which smoke can be prevented and to encourage such preventive inventions by prizes and exhibitions. In furtherance of this object it has awarded certificates and medals that are eagerly competed for in the Building Trades exhibit. In addition, the society furnishes printed blanks of complaint, which any individual may fill out and send to the authorities of his vestry declaring that on such and such occasions, giving day and hour, he has seen black smoke issuing from a designated chimney. It is conceivable that a number of such complaints might move vestry officials to action, even without interference by the society. There are other associations in other places, but their work, on similar lines, is always difficult. And the greater the need for it the more difficult it is. Yet *smoke means waste.*

Increase in the use of electrical energy suggests that in time this invisible power may relieve cities of a pall of smoke, or it may be that an invention which fully consumes will some day be born of the necessity now so evident. Meanwhile, it would seem that the only hope was in the long, slow course of education. Yet the evil of dense smoke, its injury not merely to the exteriors of all buildings in the city, and to the vegetation in park and

garden, but the harm which it does to health, to clothing, books, pictures, furniture, all household decorations, and exhibited wares, seems so obvious, that one would think no other instruction than that of the senses necessary. If the extra expense imposed on a community by its smoke could be accurately measured, it is not unlikely that the aggregate, to which every member would contribute something, would far exceed the saving that is made by submission to the nuisance.

The position has been taken by some of the champions of a purer atmosphere, and by some of the sellers of bituminous coal, that the instruction which will give the best result is in the proper building and care of fires. No doubt negligence and ignorance do make the evil worse than it might otherwise be, but it is improbable that the reformer is fitted to give many points to experienced firemen regarding the care of their boilers. In fact, dreadful as the evil has now become in such communities as Pittsburg, Sheffield, Manchester, or Birmingham, it would seem that there was so little ground to look for its immediate reform—with better transportation facilities and sharper economic competition, the nuisance is stated to be gaining rather than losing—that perhaps it is well to point out here its one æsthetic virtue. This is the glorious brilliancy of the effects which a soot-laden atmosphere sometimes causes at sundown. It is a pathetically small credit entry when one considers the sufficient natural beauty of the rural sunset.

There is one thing more to be said. Grant the

injury which volumes of dense black smoke pouring from factory chimneys do to all articles that pretend to fine and delicate texture and to beauty, and it is clear that the individual possessor of these things will move them, when he can, to a place where they will not be thus hurt. The æsthetic sensibilities of the community as a whole are doubtless dulled in their suffrance of the smoke outrage; and the individual who here and there retains his love of beautiful objects will remove from so positively injurious and unsympathetic an environment as soon as possible. Not many months ago, for instance, the newspapers of New York gleefully recorded the removal, to that city's clearer air, of a Chicago Crœsus, who was described as having been "for many years a most ardent and liberal collector of paintings, porcelains, tapestries, and rare bric-à-brac," and whose personal art treasures they glibly estimated at $1,000,000 value. He bought a magnificent town house and a place on the Hudson, and was subsequently reported as saying over his signature that the "principal" reason for his removal from Chicago was his fear of the permanent injury which the smoke of that city would cause to his treasures. A Chicago paper had some weeks earlier published a list of rich "absentees," who were regularly "spending their income away from the city in which it was earned." The total of principal was put at $130,000,000. However little faith be put in the figures, it is clear from both stories that the direct monetary loss in this way may be very large;

and that even worse is the accompanying loss in artistic treasures and in the social worth and culture which properly belong to the city. With the rapid growth in the United States of a leisure class, free to choose its place of residence, this consideration is likely to become of increased importance. So more than municipal æsthetics is at stake. There is a danger to the higher life. "The city beautiful" may be marred by smoke in a sense spiritual as well as in the sense material.

Of all building regulations, those that are adopted purely with a view to municipal æsthetics are comparatively few and simple. They are based on the principle that it is as proper to curb the freedom of the individual for the good of the community in matters of public art as it is in those of public health or safety. Accordingly they undertake to limit the height of all structures (generally hygienic considerations are involved in this requirement), to secure in their appearance some degree of harmony with their neighbors, and then to require the plans for the public buildings to receive the approval of artists.

In Europe such rules, nearly all of recent adoption, are much more common than in the United States. Paris, Berlin, Rome, Vienna, and many smaller cities, have adopted regulations for the external appearance of their buildings as naturally as for the sanitary condition of the structures. They have usually considered street reforms of small account if not supplemented by such requirements.

In Paris these rules fix the maximum height of façades at 20 metres (65½ feet), determine the number of stories, and compel private builders to observe, in the words of the law, the "*raccordement et l'harmonie des lignes de construction*" of their street. The result on the newer thoroughfares is undoubtedly monotonous, but the eye travels down the long vista of street without distraction of its enjoyment. A little less insistence upon details would perhaps secure the same result with more variety of architecture, and the tendency of the moment seems to appreciate that. The Paris law requires also that the buildings be kept neat and fresh in appearance by periodical repair or repainting. In other words, visible deterioration of a piece of property is held not to be a personal matter with the owner, for it depreciates values in its neighborhood. It also concerns the whole community as a blot upon the city's attractiveness. Application of the same theories is found in other cities. In Belgium, where the communal law does not explicitly impose the power of æsthetic criticism upon the council, a question on lines somewhat similar was taken into the courts. The law required that building plans should be approved by the municipal authorities. A plan which was submitted showed a blank wall to the street, and the city council directed that on this account it be modified. The intending builder doubted its right to enforce an æsthetic request and took the matter to the Court of Appeal. He declared that the council's command was justified on no consideration

of health, convenience, safety, or availability, and was therefore unwarranted. The judgment of the court (June 20, 1890) was that the council had the right to demand "correspondence with the site," and consequently to prescribe style.

In Rome the building regulations adopted in 1887 are very explicit. They fix the limit of building height proportionate to the width of the street (which is becoming a rather common method), declaring that the height of a structure must not exceed one and one half times the width of the street upon which it fronts, with a proviso that the maximum height shall not be over 24 metres (78½ feet), nor the minimum under 14 (45¾ feet). The style, material, and other matters of appearance are also subject to official surveillance. Vienna supplements building rules that are strict from the sanitary point of view with explicit requirements regarding street lines, balconies, height, and general harmony of appearance; but here, again, there is now some relaxation in nonessentials or on minor streets, so that greater variety may appear. Birmingham is representative of a curious English law. This regulates the height of buildings by asserting that the owner of any premises is entitled to such light as would come to the lower windows of his building if a line drawn upward from the edge of his premises at an angle of 45 degrees met with no resistance. If the opposite structure, therefore, should rob him of a portion of that light he can bring suit, and he is likely to be awarded either a regular rental per window for light lost or a lump sum in

relinquishment of his rights. It is said that the plan, which leaves the initiative with individuals rather than with the city, does not work very well, as each separate case requires separate decision. Still, Birmingham is without very tall buildings, so that to an American at least the influence of the law seems to be wholesomely restrictive.

In Germany, an interesting device is found in the zoning system. This divides the possible building territory into districts, and then prescribes for each the sort of structure that may be there erected. Thus, in the district where detached villas are to be, it is made illegal for any one to destroy the charm of the neighborhood by constructing a tall apartment house. The regulations imposed under this system,—which, in its recent application in America, is more accurately described as "districting" than as "zoning,"—consider the height of construction which may be allowed, the percentage of lot area which may be covered, and the use to which the property may be put. The purpose of the latter restriction is to safeguard residential neighborhoods from the intrusion of factories, and in some instances from the intrusion of business. A very elaborate example of districting is offered in the United States by New York City. Sometimes, as there as in 1916, the regulations can be adopted on the decision of a branch of the city government which is vested with responsibility in the matter; sometimes it is determined by a vote of the affected property.

But because the constitution is held to stand in

the way of restrictions that are not clearly based upon public safety and public welfare, the regulation of building on purely aesthetic grounds is not accomplished with us through law. Harmony between buildings cannot be legally required. As a consequence, successive houses on any street may represent Gothic, Classic, Renaissance, Colonial, Queen Anne, and unnamable modifications of these styles. The architect has meekly followed the owner's wishes. There is a fine representation of the whims of tasteless, egotistic wealth, the stamp of untrained individualism. There is no repose, no communal expression, no dignified and epoch-marking work, little imagination. A municipal requirement of harmony has at least the merit of enforcing the lesson of obligation to the community, and of giving to the architect that mastership which is his right.

There has been talk, but little more than that, of one commendable project. This is to give to the city control over buildings facing upon park property. The purpose is that the large parks, generally secured on a city's outskirts, may be saved from a border, on any side, of shabbiness and squalor. The need is only temporary, as city growth shortly makes the property with park-frontage most valuable, and doubtless it is realization that the evil will so soon disappear which has prevented much affirmative action.

In this line of restrictive effort, however, even the movement with us, lately become widespread and promising, to check the "sky-scraper's" upward flight may be traced in large part to hygienic

considerations. There has been such abuse of the ability to build high that the injury makes a broad appeal for correction. Until this kind of construction was overdone and the very tall building invaded the narrow street where it had no business, where it could command no appreciation for itself and changed a thoroughfare into a sunless chasm, it could make some claim to indulgence. Many considerations render it impossible to assert an arbitrary limit which might be forgiven; but plainly the structure of ten or twelve stories could be suffered where the building of thirty stories, on however broad a square, could be only a public calamity. Until they were so ridiculously overdone, the sky-scrapers made, then, a certain crude, barbaric claim even to æsthetic liking. For, silhouetted against the brilliant sky of midday or of twilight, they had a poster-like dash and daring of artistic merit; or lifting their heads serene and calm into the very storm-clouds, or fading in mist till their upper lines were almost lost, they gave substance to a poetry as clearly and fittingly dramatic as the pure architectural poems of ancient Greece were lyric. And again, at night, their dark façades all gemmed with lights until they seemed a bit of firmament tipped on end, they imparted to the municipality, in one way and another, a beauty all the better because so characteristic. And through it all one could see exemplified American industrial courage and aspiration. It was as though these tall structures, breaking with their various reasonable heights the sky-line

of the street, wrote upon its façade, themselves like notes, the music of the march of industry, energy, and hope.

But we have now gone too far. The music is all jar and discord, and the hymn that is sung by the people below is not of praise, but pity; so at last ordinances are appearing to check the tall building with us as it has been checked abroad. No doubt the congestion of the street and of transportation facilities which has resulted from the tall building is inducing this action quite as much as are æsthetic considerations. Indeed, the liberality of the various limits imposed by our ordinances is assurance that this peculiarity of American urban architecture is to linger. There is to be repression, not suppression.[1] And perhaps, if we can frame an ordinance demanding regard for scale, this is best, since the tall building which America invented is so clearly an expression of its own peculiar Zeitgeist. Nor need we fear lest beauty hold aloof from structures that pass a hundred feet in height. The steel skeleton construction gives free hand to the architect in the façade, and art must find in it a worthy theme.

Just here should be mentioned an interesting event in the field of building regulation in the United States, one of significance. This is the discussion which, after many months, resulted in a special statute limiting to a height of ninety feet the buildings on Copley Square, in Boston. The moving considerations were almost entirely æsthetic, so the story is pertinent. The "square"

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 299.

was a triangle of grass, unadorned and plain, but facing upon it, on each side, were buildings beautiful in themselves and noble in what they stood for, and for this character the area was dear to Boston. Some individuals planned to erect there a tall apartment house, that should dwarf Trinity Church and the Public Library, and the community rose in protest. Obviously, a proposition to restrict the building rights more in one part of the city than in another would arouse violent antagonism. A war that revealed an unsuspected interest in sky-lines and architectural harmony was waged in the editorial and correspondence departments of the newspapers, and wrote its record on a largely signed petition. The point was made that to guarantee the preservation of the beauty of a neighborhood, by legislation that is prohibitive to inharmonious construction there, is to add to the value of the ground at least as much as the proposed restriction in building height could take away. The statute was enacted, and when its opponents tested the matter in the courts, the Supreme Court of the State handed down a decision [1] fully supporting the restrictions. The strictly urban character of the space, its almost incidental possession of beauty, and the æsthetic grounds upon which the affirmative argument was successfully placed, make the instance as notable as it was suggestive.

It need scarcely be said that a street can be as

[1] October 30, 1899. Confirmed by U. S. Supreme Court, Welch *vs.* Swasey.

certainly degraded by that which passes up and down it, regularly or irregularly, as by that which is fixed with more or less permanence on its edge. In the city with conscious and earnest aspirations toward urban beauty there will be a vigilance in behalf of the dignity of the public way that will scrutinize the traffic as well as the façades.

In the streets of Paris, a few years ago, there appeared a cab of most extraordinary design. It was very high, evidently of great age, and very ugly. The officials watched its course for a little while and then ordered its retirement. All Paris is said to have approved of the command. Yet more recently in Washington the police department began a crusade against disreputable vehicles offered there for public hire. The carriages were condemned and their owners fined. In commenting upon the matter a local newspaper asserted that the prayers of all good citizens would be with those engaged "in so laudable an undertaking."

Doubtless there can be traced a connection between good pavements and ramshackle vehicles. The very smoothness of the public way, which makes the maintenance of unsightly and rickety carriages inexcusable, is yet the explanation of their survival. The vehicle that would be knocked to pieces on one of the old-time rough pavements would be good for several years' service on Washington's miles of asphalt. Thus with better pavements there is needed a keener vigilance regarding the appearance of the carriages which are driven upon them.

A word should perhaps be said here of the efforts to suppress unnecessary noise in cities. The right of the community to curb the individual in this respect may be assumed, because it is asserted in so many ordinances and so widely. The excuse is usually, and very properly, hygienic. To forbid the carrying of iron beams through city streets unless they be so wrapped that they make no noise when jolted, is unquestionably to safeguard the public nerves. But incidentally it makes for peace in the city beautiful. The ordinances are often extended to apply to itinerant brass bands; in Chicago and Detroit, among other places, there have been successful crusades against steam whistles; in Paris the little boats on the Seine can carry no whistles, and ring their bells only under exceptional circumstances; a few societies for the suppression of street noises have been started; and in Boston the city Music Commission is charged, among other things, with seeing that the hurdy-gurdies and hand-organs are in tune. Every year there is a solemn examination of all these instruments, when each applicant for a license plays his best. If his instrument is not in tune the license is withheld until the performer has made an attempt to remedy the trouble. Then he has a chance at another examination. As the popular ear is not oversensitive in matters of music, it may reasonably be held that the effort here is less hygienic than æsthetic. Of course city noise has inevitably increased with the growth and congestion of traffic, but smooth pavements and rubber tires are mechanical

helps to greater quiet; and public sentiment is powerful. When the evil is very bad, the enforcement of ordinances will be more strictly insisted upon. The City Improvement Society of New York reports that in 1899 a large majority of the whole number of complaints that were filed with it referred to one subject—noise; and this tendency, it says, is becoming constantly more marked. In parts of London the shouting of newsboys has been stilled.

Superficially, there is no part of the discussion of the development of civic beauty, considered historically or theoretically, as discouraging in the extent of its conquests, or as repellent to enthusiasm, as a catalogue of efforts in repression and suppression. But there is scarcely any part of the effort more important. Until we can clear the street of wires, and clear the air of the black smoke's double menace to the city's "higher life"; until we secure some artistic sense in building and restrain the advertiser from his conscienceless assault, we cannot hope for urban amenity and may well put dreams of beauty out of mind. Good pavements, kept clean, make it possible for the citizen to lift his eyes; but until repression and suppression have done their work there will be scant inducement for him to look about. We must have a *tabula rasa* for civic art.

But because creative activity has always strongest hold on the imagination, it is proof of conscientiousness that actual efforts have taken the repressive form as often and as largely as they have. The communities for which we have most to fear

are those that business has so fully taken to itself that they are mere marts, or exchanges, thronged by day and emptied by night. They can but rarely feel the thrill of civic spirit. The "city" in London is an example; or lower New York, or Manchester. Here the well-to-do live in the suburbs on the outer rim, and the whole section—without fashionable centre—is given up to trade and manufacture. In such cases utility and economy receive a disproportionate measure of the popular regard. Municipal æsthetics make small conquest under these conditions, for the first negative steps are slighted, the drudgery in the reaching out for art is scorned—and drudgery is elemental. A plebiscitum would hardly approve a smoke ordinance there, for example, and ordinances that have not popular support are difficult to enforce.

In some ways, however, the repressive measures advocated in this chapter are the highest fruit of the growth of regard for urban æsthetics. The progress along their lines is full, then, of encouragement. It is more significant than most creative adornment could be, for there is involved in it an element of self-denial, of self-subordination for the common good, with results that seem unheroic only because they are negative. And these measures have an unexpectedly strong ally in the requirements of modern hygiene and sanitation. The burial of wires, the suppression of smoke, the regulation of building, are all demanded for the physical welfare of the citizens; and the plea for the satis-

faction of the senses, strong in itself, is stronger because of that demand.

Discovery and invention have lately come forward as singularly powerful allies to the effort for city and village beauty. The same help comes from the increased regard for human life. This will appear in other chapters as well as here, for the alliance is not less for offensive than for defensive purposes. We shall see it urging the setting aside of parks and playgrounds and the planting of trees as, in the very planning of the city, it insisted upon broad streets and then required that the streets be clean. Long ago cities were adorned because their nobles were rich and ambitious, because a prince thought thus to silence the discontent of his subjects and add to his own glory, or because the people loved art only for art's sake. But selfishness was the commoner motive. For the improvement of towns and cities to-day there has been added a strange conjunction of factors, making for their beauty on democratic, worthier, and more permanent lines. There is invention and the powerful aid of new ideals of hygiene and sanitation, and to these allies we shall find that strong impulses of philanthropy and education are added.

CHAPTER V

THE ADVERTISEMENT PROBLEM

THE control of advertising on the streets of towns and cities is a line of æsthetic effort in which relatively scant progress has been made on either side of the sea. And yet it is inconceivable that in the growth of regard for civic beauty this should not be destined to importance. Already private agitation in Great Britain and the enthusiasm of some artists in Belgium have made a stout beginning, while in the general assumption of the right to official censure of posters on moral grounds and the common popular objection to over-street banners, there is recognition that the will of the individual in this matter, as in others, may be curbed for the general good.

Cities in the United States have not stopped, however, merely at this. They have ordinances determining the minimum height above the sidewalk of projecting signs. There has been talk[1] of a State law forbidding, as in Paris, any advertisement on a tree. A rule that has been recently adopted in Cincinnati prohibits the fixing of posters to a fence enclosing building operations. The area or height of bill-boards is limited, and in some cities, as in Chicago, ordinances requiring in a residence block the

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 300.

consent of a majority of the frontage before a bill-board can be set up have been approved. The courts, however, as in New York, have disapproved ordinances prohibiting bill-boards overlooking parks. San Francisco has an ordinance protecting poles from advertising disfigurement and prescribing that signs on buildings shall not exceed a height of three feet and on land of ten feet. There has lately been passed in Chicago an ordinance requiring that no bill-board on a residence street or pleasure drive shall be erected without the consent of three fourths of the frontage on the block. Clearly, the principles involved are important. Æsthetic considerations alone are concerned. In the latter case, for instance, assumed depreciation of property can be due only to that, while in the legislation concerning the neighborhood of parks the premise is that huge and glaring signs mar the appeal which the park's beauty is designed to make. There is abundant suggestion for any city or village, then, in the mere recital of these ordinances; and we shall find that there is required no long further step to censure of all advertisements which mar the beauty of boulevard, avenue, and street, which destroy vistas, or ruin good façades. From illustrations of various specific achievements, it will be possible to draw many hints as to restrictive procedure.

This forward step has been already taken, not only in Chicago, but by confident workers for municipal art in England and in Belgium. That great national society, L'Œuvre Nationale Belge, in whose hands is the movement for a municipal

artistic renaissance in the latter country, chose as the special subject of its crusade in 1895 the character of the advertising signs on the streets. Not satisfied with the merely negative rôle of the critic, it strove to combat, in its own terms, "the widely current but false idea that art is incompatible with economy and the necessities of trade." But in its restrictive operations, which need alone concern us now, the society succeeded in illustrating—with a power of conviction to which later events have borne witness—the important but strangely novel contention that the sign should be considered as a decorative element of the business structure. It has contended that if the advertisement fails in this respect, ceasing to be a part of the architectural *ensemble*, or to harmonize with the architecture, it does only injury to the building upon which it is, creating an ugliness of the public way with no gain in advantage from the view-point of publicity. On the basis of the appreciation which was secured for this claim, the society subsequently urged that to a division of the city government there should be given power to prevent the desecration of good streets or buildings by ugly signs.

In England the like doctrine has been preached with energy by the Society for Checking the Abuses of Public Advertising. Its efforts are as earnestly directed for the maintenance of civic dignity as to prevent the defilement of rural beauty. Since advertisements are well known to be its prey, it may be well to quote from the society's prospectus the formal declaration that it "aims at promoting a

regard for dignity and propriety of aspect in towns." Founded in 1893, the organization has devoted itself to efforts to secure restrictive legislation, instead of to attempts, that must be hopeless, to suppress of itself the innumerable violations of good taste. In the prosecution of this work it takes the ground that the instinct to be appealed to is that "of patriotic regard for the aspect of our country," not the desire of individuals to be protected from what they resent as mere personal annoyance. National in scope, and assisted in many places by local improvement societies which, in that particular line, become virtually branches of it, "SCAPA" (the Society for Checking the Abuses of Public Advertising) is able to publish a long list of achievements.

Edinburgh has had for some years a by-law prohibiting sky-signs — advertisements whose letters, standing clear of the structure's top, show against the sky. To this has been added in 1899 an act which makes, the local Cockburn Association proudly claims, Edinburgh a pioneer in the official regulation of general advertisements. It gives to the corporation, as representative of the community, the right to say where advertisements may be placed, and hence to prevent their erection where they could injure the attractiveness of the city. It confers no power of censorship over particular signs, the common law being depended upon to check advertisements of improper character. Glasgow, at a sacrifice of £4000 a year, determined that the municipal trams should not be disfigured

by advertising, and this rule has been adopted by Liverpool, Hull, Sheffield, and other towns. In Manchester, among various cities, all hoardings belonging to the improvement committee are, by order of the council, kept free from advertisements, and many architects have followed the city's example in making a like requirement of their contractors. London has adopted a sky-sign act, and the County Council has gone to the society for the draft of a general sign-regulating ordinance, and has banished advertising transparencies from its own (the municipal) trams. Flashing electric signs have been prohibited in various places. Girl placard-bearers in London were suppressed by the moral force of an aroused public opinion. A railroad company was induced to remove the maze of advertisements from its station platforms. The placards that once disfigured the pier at Eastbourne have been taken away; and at Rhyl the municipal body refused to license a theatre on a pier simply because the outside wall was let for a huge soap advertisement. At Richmond an effort to secure at an extravagant price the use of an island in the river for advertising purposes was defeated. And finally a petition, signed by more than three hundred London architects, was presented in 1899 to the County Council begging action to repress the evils of monstrous letter and illuminated advertising.

In making this selection from a long catalogue of achievements, the endeavor has been to choose those only which are typical or suggestive. With

like effort we may go beyond the reach of the society, still illustrating how, in the long campaign for beauty, new evils must be met by new aggressiveness. To such advertisement control as is officially exercised, then, in Belgium and Great Britain, let these instances be added: In Berlin the president of police has issued an ordinance prohibiting advertisements on the outsides, or on the windows, of public omnibuses; and miscellaneous paper advertisements in the streets are allowed only on boards or columns especially prepared for the purpose. In the little Dutch city of Leiden the municipality itself manages the public advertising, and so frees the picturesque, canal-cut streets from unkempt hoardings. The city erects at the principal corners and by the canal bridges boards of neat and attractive design for public notices. A projecting top prevents the rain from tearing or washing away the bills, the boards are surmounted by ornamental woodwork, and the advertising is thus not only kept in bounds but is made almost artistic. Of like purpose, and better known, are the familiar kiosks of Paris, and the city-owned pillars for theatrical bills. In Paris vigorous agitation has lately arisen against the defacement of building-fronts by hugely lettered signs, and there are ordinances which prohibit the attachment of notices to any tree on the public way, or to the municipal lighting apparatus, while it is a carefully worded clause that renders possible, with the permission of the city council, the maintenance of public lamps for advertising purposes. In theory

all the advertisements on Paris streets must receive the approval of the administration in looks as well as in morality, though in practice this matter is usually left to the police department, the law having made liable to prosecution the violators of good taste. In Rome the municipal and government acts are posted on marble tablets owned by the government and reserved for this use. Private announcements are on bill-boards, of regulated size and form, which can be erected only on permission from the property-owner and from the city.

In the United States, unhappily, the popular enthusiasm concerning the æsthetic control of advertisements has not reached as large proportions; but now and then societies for the improvement of cities in one way or another do take it up as a side issue — in wide admission of the need. Thus in Boston, the strong Twentieth Century Club has gone to the expense of having the existing ordinances printed on many thousand cards that the public might better know them, and has had prefixed to the ordinances a pledge that the signer will permit no advertisements on his property, other than plain and inoffensive ones necessary to his tenant's business or his own. Through its art department it has also offered a money prize for the set of twelve photographs that shall illustrate most effectively the æsthetic injury wrought by glaring advertisements.

In 1899 the president of the British Society for Checking the Abuses of Public Advertising submitted to the superintending architect of the London

County Council a series of specific suggestions for the regulation of advertising. Included among them were several recommendations of international application.

The law in London already limited the height of hoardings for the display of posters and regarded them as subject to taxes, like other rentable property. In addition to this, the president of the British society suggested that it was an "essential thing" to fix a height above which there should be *no* letters or trade emblems. He said: "The thirty-feet limit would work a splendid change in most of our great avenues," and added: "Individually, I think it would be a grave mistake to allow any indulgence to gable ends; letters there are far more disfiguring than on the fronts, for they form a feature in the lateral view. Why should a man have a privilege to attack the eye merely because his house happens to be higher than his neighbor's? Nothing could be more discouraging to careful architecture than to put a premium on crude-wall space. Much that is worst in London and Paris is due to the temptation to use up what is called an ugly end for huge lettering. I should like an absolute veto on gable-end lettering. If the empty space is ungainly, it is at least neutral." He suggested that space occupied by lettering should "have a prescribed ratio to the superficies of the façade below the thirty-feet line"—his idea being to prevent by such restriction the plastering of a small house with letters and emblems from base to parapet. He urged that in no case should

the size of letters exceed 18 inches by 13½ inches, the limit to the height of the advertisement's exposure making this reasonable; and then that they should adhere to the flat surface of the wall, and when possible be part of the architectural design. He advocated special regulations for hanging signs and flags—"forms," he said, "which might easily be rendered decorative," and which, therefore, ought not to be unduly discouraged.[1]

The London law's assumption that bill-boards should be subject to taxes, like other rentable property, suggests the feasibility of regulating advertisements by a tax graduated according to the superficial area of the sign. And this offers a new source of municipal income. In Europe a tax on advertisements or hoardings is by no means uncommon. In France the law, as long ago as 1852, imposed a fee for all painted signs in public places; and the person wishing to put up such a sign has, in his request for the permission, to make a declaration giving full intelligence regarding it, including even the text of the sign. In Germany,

[1] Chinese tradesmen advertise their shops by means of perpendicular streamers, hung from the upper stories by a short horizontal rod. When streamers at various heights and of various lengths, and colored harmoniously, flutter in the breeze, a very festive appearance can be given to the street. But to make this plan successful in the great cities of Western civilization, there would have to be a popular degree of æsthetic appreciation and a harmony of action for which it is entirely vain to look. And it should be added that such a device, whatever the brief merit of its life and picturesqueness, would screen the architecture.

also, the special advertising boards and columns are rendered a source of income. The city lets the right to erect them, after determining and stating the charge that may be made for all advertisements so posted; the requirements of Berlin affording an interesting and suggestive example. Here, the contractor's columns must be of the regulated size and model; there must be one for each city district, and on the upper edge of each column there must be given in easily readable form (a) the number of the city district; (b) the number of the police-station therein; (c) the location of the nearest postal and telegraph office; (d) that of the nearest fire alarm; (e) that of the nearest ambulance station, and the directions for obtaining free carriages for transporting persons suffering from infectious diseases. The contractor must keep the columns in a condition satisfactory to the royal police presidency and to the magistrate; but they shall be esteemed the property of the city, even though the contractor has erected them. If they have to be removed, he must remove them. For the monopoly, thus restricted, bids are invited. In 1891 the contract for the columns in Berlin was let for a term of ten years at the annual rental of 250,000 marks ($63,750). This was clear profit to the city, which yet retained the right to condemn any sign. In 1901 the rental became 400,000 marks.

Obviously, the problem of advertisement control is large, and, wholly apart from the financial possibilities to the city (which are somewhat incidental in the discussion of municipal beauty), they are not

a little complicated. The restrictive ordinances adopted in various places are full of suggestion, and taken together reveal a very earnest desire for the betterment of the public way. They show that considerable has been done already, and that in this department of effort a great deal more might be done for city beauty. They encourage, also, with the proof that the control of advertisements on the public way is no visionary and impractical conception, and that any city or village with ideals of beauty can find plenty of examples of how to go to work. And they can even put something into their coffers by going to work. If, however, the dream of a city so dignified, so majestic and self-respecting that its streets are not permitted to shout panaceas and clothing, or to scream firm names in unwilling ears, seems Utopian to the faint-hearted, we may moderate the contention and put it in simpler terms. Picture the result if only the more discordant notes were silenced. The result would be worth the effort then; and for it so elementary a conception is needed as merely the thought that the individual has no more "right" to offend the public's eye with flaunting self-assertiveness than to offend its ear with crashing sounds or the nostrils with unpleasant odors. Once obtain admission of that, as patient efforts doubtless can, and the dream is in a fair way to realization.[1]

[1] There can be profitably quoted here an extract from the case presented on behalf of the city of Edinburgh to that Parliamentary committee to which had been referred the bill to give to the corporation extensive power of control over

The advertisement problem is not limited, however, to restrictive efforts. As the city beautiful requires that its bridges and buildings have not merely negative, but positive, merit, so it demands that such a conspicuous feature as the advertisements on the public way be beautiful.

The idea that æsthetic charm can be given to the glaring, shrieking letters of the common sign and job-print bill seems at first fantastical. But it is acknowledged in the command of Paris that on the principal streets shop announcements shall be only in gold leaf; and everywhere designers themselves give grotesque curves and varied background to their letters, as though in recognition that some-

advertisements. The petitioners say: "In November, 1897, Bovril, Limited, acquired an option of lease over some property in James' Court, overlooking Princes Street and the Mound, with the object of erecting thereon one of their illuminated signs. A public outcry was raised, and remonstrances were addressed to the company by the Lord Provost, the Cockburn Association, and others, and the company, with a courtesy which deserves the thanks of the community, delayed until they ascertained the feelings of the citizens on the matter. Within a day or two they received such overwhelming evidence of the opinions of the citizens that they abandoned their purpose. In intimating this they said, 'We are without any doubt convinced that the voice of the people of Edinburgh is distinctly against the erection of an illuminated sign as contemplated; we accordingly give way before the evidence you put before us.'" Then the petitioners add, significantly, as showing that public opinion should secure the entrenchment of an ordinance, "Unfortunately, all offenders have not the courtesy and consideration of the directors of Bovril, Limited."

thing else than size and hideousness can pay. And surely from a conception that the sign should harmonize with the architectural façade and be a decorative feature of it, there is no long step to a thought of its own beauty. The Belgian society, therefore, which has advocated the latter idea so eagerly, has gone furthest in encouragement to positive beauty in signs on the streets.

In adopting this as the special object for 1895 of its battle for civic art, L'Œuvre sensibly recognized that the life of the sign was competition. To shriek a little louder than your neighbor, to startle the passenger on the street a little more fearfully than did he—all this was desired merely because you were competing with him in trying to attract the passenger's attention. It was not that you were a barbarian. In the date, also, of L'Œuvre's special effort for beauty in advertisements there is something to notice. It was the year after the society's organization, and in choosing this as its first undertaking by itself, there is evidenced the importance which its members attached to artistic signs. The society began the crusade by arranging an exposition of beautiful advertisements, ancient and modern—for there were, and had always been, a few. Then it organized a competition for plans of signs, and a competition for new signs actually constructed. We have pointed out that its effort was partly restrictive, that it was trying to show the needlessness of the ugly. But destructive criticism is a thankless and generally a profitless labor. L'Œuvre tore down to build better. So the

competitions were designed distinctly to encourage good work.

The exposition was held in the Museum of Brussels, and made a striking illustration of the sign's possible architectural application. The examples composing it offered, also, a basis from which intelligently to criticise the drawings and executed signs that were offered for the competitions, for the artists who submitted drawings only were required to show the kind of façade to which they would like to have their work attached. With the announced results of the competitions there has since been quarrel; but it is fair to say that the society was its own first critic. It confessed that the signs for which prizes were awarded were not always as good as it had wished, and very significantly that they are not the best to be now found in Belgium. If in their time they were the best of the recent work, there must have been an improvement to which these competitions were the impetus. At any rate, they revealed that tradesmen can compete in the beauty of their announcement as effectually as in size or in ugliness; and that the passenger who is struck with the beauty of a sign will turn to it a second time, and a third and a fourth with pleasure, while he whom bigness and crudeness alone have struck looks away as soon as he can. So L'Œuvre's prizes for beautiful signs do not go unsought. Sculptors and skilled workers in iron compete because of the value of the prizes, for the reputation they gain, and from their interest in their work; and merchants commission competitors

because of the incidental and secondary advertisement thus secured. Many artistic signs now add beauty to the streets of the Belgian cities.

Among the designs and the executed advertisements which secured prizes in those early competitions appropriateness was a noticeable feature. The drawing for a sign, since executed, to advertise a store where Egyptian cigarettes were sold, was Egyptian in its character. Window gardens surmounted the sign of the ale-house "A la Rose"; a kid was one of the devices in the wrought-iron sign of a store where gloves were on sale; and the advertisement over the door of a china shop was a relief in pottery. The circumstance, sufficiently natural, is yet a reminder of a time when signs were fewer and generally artistic — of that time when a fish was carved in stone over the door of the Fishmongers' Hall at Malines. Then the guild halls on the Grande Place of Brussels were erected: the Hall of the Skippers with a gable resembling the stern of a large vessel, the Hall of the Butchers with a carven swan, the House of the Wolf, or Hall of the Archers, with its Romulus and Remus scene. And in England the inns were hanging out interesting models of their quaint names.

These rebus signs, in which pictures and figures are the substitutes of words, have well nigh passed. They linger, with us, in the golden balls of the pawnbroker, in the barber's pole, in the glover's hand, in the cigar-seller's wooden Indian which is becoming almost as rare as its human prototype. Surely when we turn to civic art the rebus sign

might be well revived. It adds to the picturesqueness of the public way, it invites the talent of artists, and it stimulates the imagination and curiosity of those who love to study the aspects of a town.

The reforms in advertising from an artistic standpoint were not complete if no account were taken of the progress in poster making. A French writer has asked if there is anything more violently impudent and modern than the poster of the highway. But the Greeks and Romans, and even the Assyrians and Egyptians, made use of the publicity of the streets for their announcements, and in France itself the propositions of the Sorbonne were placarded some three centuries ago. The poster, innocent of bashfulness in presenting its impertinent message on the urban thoroughfare, may probably be counted upon, then, as a device not very modern nor likely to be short-lived, and we may be thankful if it learns to make its message beautiful and to deliver it with grace. That there has been advance along these lines is too obvious to need recital. Perhaps, however, few persons realize how recent the movement has really been. It is another case where mechanical progress has been of timely aid in the effort for beautiful cities. In 1871 Walker designed a "mural engraving" to advertise Wilkie Collins's romance, *The Woman in White*. This was in England, and the engraving, it is said, was the first illustrated poster put on the walls of London. There was no color in it, but color was implied, and when progress in

lithography shortly made colors available for the use of poster-artists the advance was rapid and was natural. Because it was the former, it was carried to extremes and was overdone; because it was the latter, the advance that was really artistic came to stay. We have awakened to the realization that careful design, grace of line, and care in color are "worth while" in posters. From this appreciation that even real talent may be properly enlisted in their behalf, though the posters be common to-day and gone to-morrow, progress ought to be easy to conception of the worth of art in more permanent advertisements.

The poster brings color to city streets, and that reveals another phase of the subject. In the cities of Renaissance Italy the gray wall of many an old palace was brightened by its owner's escutcheon. Heraldry plays yet a decorative part on modern streets, where the arms of royalty blaze in heavy gilt over the shops that have catered to a reigning house. We ought to find a suggestion here. In a republic there may be scant regard for the crest of an individual, but why should not the trade-mark be made artistic, be colored, and emblazoned on walls as proudly, in an age of commerce and industry, as were prowess and birth in chivalric days?

So with the work of the artists, the sculptors, the hammerers of iron, with rebus signs and heraldic devices giving to advertisements a beauty long unknown, the business streets of cities no more would

be meaningless printed lines. There would be nothing violently assertive, nothing glaring; but art would stud with beauty, life, and interest the background of harmonious façades. We should find the proper solution of the advertisement problem not a discouraging task but an inspiring opportunity, and what seems a far-off goal would be reached by easy steps.



CHAPTER VI

MAKING UTILITIES BEAUTIFUL

TO bring art into the street, to make the accessories of a modern thoroughfare artistic and beautiful, so that the eye as it travels down the vista of street may not merely find nothing to grate on its finer sense, but may discover grace in many an object of utility and so take pleasure in it—*there* is a purpose fitted to call out the earnest effort of the worker for civic art and to kindle his enthusiasm. The opportunity has not passed unperceived. A whole group of endeavors along this line is familiarly classed in various European countries as *art public* or *art dans la rue*, and its results have formed the subject of expositions, national and international. In the United States, also, the task is taken up, though as yet mainly by artists, who find inspiration in the wish and opportunity "to clothe in an artistic form that which civilization has made useful in the public life," and who find justification for their efforts in the economy with which large results may be obtained. Their high

precedent is in nature's unfailing investure of utility with beauty.

It is not a new dream, a passing fad of the hour, born of the wish to make cities fairer. The richly ornate standards of the flagstaffs before St. Mark's in Venice, the wrought iron lanterns at the corners of the Strozzi palace in Florence, the frieze of the hospital in Pistoja, the well of Quentin Metsys in the square at Antwerp, the old guild signs — are not these relics enough to show the glory of *art dans la rue* in the cities of the Southern and Northern Renaissance? When civic art was at its best there was earnest effort to make street necessities beautiful. Artists did not think it beneath their dignity to expend talent on those street furnishings which all men saw. The beauty which they could give to lamp or sign or flagstaff was for the community's pleasure. It added to the splendor and repute, not of private fortune only, but of the city.

What, then, are those street necessities upon which artistic form should be bestowed? We may take a hint from the chapter on repression and suppression and from the relics of the civic art of long ago. Surely to the house-fronts that were not to be too high nor inharmonious there should be given a degree of positive beauty. The overhead wires were best suppressed, but, until they are, the poles that support them should be rendered as artistic as possible. The signs, street-lights, and flagstaffs that demanded the attention of artists centuries ago require it now; and to these the

urban progress in public comfort has added, as necessities of the modern city street, mail facilities, lavatories, and the rapid-transit plant.

One would think that in the matter of house-fronts, if restrictive ordinances could successfully prevent inartistic excesses, attainment to beauty might be safely left to result from the natural exertions of individual rivalry. That is not, however, the case. It happens often, but not always. In England a fine regard for interior beauty is very commonly accompanied by complete indifference as to the exterior. Some of the mansions most artistic or splendid within are shabby or ugly on the outside. They give pleasure to the few who enter; but to the many who pass in the street they convey no grateful sensation. Silent and cold and stern, they add to the forbidding aspect of the town. In New York for many years an accepted style of residential façade, with the custom of wholesale construction, has created such a monotony of architecture that one house is like all the others in the block, though within there may be a dozen degrees of elegance and luxury, the individual's taste fully asserting itself. So New York and London are glaring examples; but the indifference which they illustrate in multiple is revealed very widely.

There is need of something more than restriction if we would have our street façades surely beautiful. There is need of more than even the requirement of harmony and the insistence of Paris on

freshness and repair. Private owners of large property, in opening new streets, sometimes name in their deeds of sale a minimum figure, which each purchaser of a lot binds himself not to go beneath in the construction of his house. And this figure is to be exclusive of furnishings. But for the city at large there is often required an incentive to original effort, some prick to individual conscience as reminder of obligation to the community, as suggestion that to the city which has given a handsome or a beautiful street something in its turn is due. Because natural rivalry and private selfishness do so much, however, the result is generally left to them, and when they fail the community stands helplessly aside, deploring the consequence.

The energetic workers in Brussels in the new municipal art movement were not content to do that. In the first year of their organization as a national society, that is, in 1894, they offered prizes for the most beautiful constructions on a new street which the city had opened, the Rue Joseph Stevens. The plan favorably impressed official Paris and has been adopted there with even more conspicuousness. In December, 1897, the municipal council authorized an annual competition among the architects and the owners of the houses to be henceforth built in Paris. It appointed a jury composed of five members of the council, of the managing director of the *Services d'Architecture et des Promenades et Plantations*, of the supervising architect or his first deputy, and of two architects chosen by the formally entered competitors. The

six owners of the structures which the jury judged most beautiful or artistic were to be exempt from half their share of the street tax. In addition, the architect of each structure thus selected was to receive a gold medal and the contractor a bronze medal, an early suggestion that the architect's reward should be a thousand francs having been discarded as not sufficiently honorable. This competition, which applied to the whole city, was supplemented by another applying especially to a new street, the Rue Réaumur, and open to the owners, architects, and builders of the houses erected upon it between January 1, 1896, and January 1, 1900. In this case four owners, instead of six, could receive the reward. The new thoroughfare was in the heart of business Paris, and it was realized that its buildings would be commercial or industrial. Thus the double competition had the merit of emphasizing the application of the general principle to all kinds of structures.

There may fairly be criticism of a notion that art must lean upon an artificial stimulus; but before we criticise we should distinguish between art and genius. And in any event the public competition teaches a healthy lesson. It is strong to counteract the tendency to fancy that exteriors may be neglected if interiors be beautiful, and that good taste may reasonably be selfish. Appreciation that the city can afford to give up half the street tax affecting an expensive structure, if only that structure have a conspicuously beautiful façade, is worth more to the community than the additional degree

of beauty bestowed in response to the offer. It were cheaply bought by any municipality through the institution of such a competition.

In this turning of the walls of private buildings to good purpose, there is another lesson, of narrower application, to be learned from Paris. One can find it written upon the city in several places, but nowhere more strikingly than at the Place St. Michel. As you cross from the Cité to the left bank of the Seine by the Pont St. Michel, you see before you the handsome fountain that has given its name to bridge and square. Standing nearly a hundred feet high, in a niche which has the form of a triumphal arch, its back is against the blank side-wall of the large building in the angle of the street. It forms, where in another city a huge advertisement might have made hideous wall and square, a rich façade, which not only adorns the square, but makes a noble background to the perspective from the bridge. One can see that in any city where the street system is largely the diagonal, there must be many structures—both in the obtuse and acute angles—that require particularly careful treatment. They impose a heavy obligation on the architect by the very splendor of the opportunity which they give to him, demanding a façade that will be effective at a distance as well as near, of a dignity suitable for perspective view. The fountain of St. Michel gives a hint that is of value in solving this problem in civic art.

An attempt to give artistic form to the street

furnishings, whose one excuse for being is their usefulness, is a recently revived and a still limited line of effort. So far as it is organized, and is extraneous to the companies that make or use the furnishings, and is public, the effort is novel. It has appeared prominently in Belgium, in Paris, and lately in Chicago and New York; yet, compared to the breadth of the possible field, its conquest is small.

Street furnishings may be defined as all that visible apparatus which makes for the comfort and convenience of the thoroughfare. They now include telegraph and other poles, lighting and rapid-transit apparatus, stations of public comfort, flag-staffs, shelters, rests, etc. We shall find in Belgium, Paris, and the United States three suggestively distinct forms of organized effort to secure beauty in these necessities.

In Belgium the effort is in the hands of the national society, L'Œuvre Nationale Belge, of which there has been already more than one occasion to speak. It may be well to go back a little, and trace the rise and origin of the society, for it has imitators in the cities of Italy, and in Paris herself, and it has become not merely a national, but an international, power. Eugene Broerman, a young Belgian artist of Brussels, went to Italy to continue his artistic studies. Taken ill, he was unable to paint for many weeks, and could only wander about, noting traces of the glory of the ancient civic art and the sad estate to which this was now fallen. One day he asked himself why

such lapse as he everywhere saw should be permitted; why those who had æsthetic sense should not form a society that would make art and beauty on the public way its aim; why the present should not value beauty as did the past. The thought grew upon him, making steadily increasing appeal to his earnestness.

A plan gradually shaped itself and when he returned to Brussels he was full of enthusiasm. To secure good backing he obtained personally the indorsement of fifty prominent men for his ideal and project. Then he interested his artist-friends, and with their assistance arranged a fête that should bring his plan before the public and at once provide the society with funds. This fête was held in the spring of 1894, and was a success. An organization under the title, originally, of Association for Art Applied to the Street and to Objects of Public Use was promptly formed, and a prospectus issued. The idea won its way rapidly. The association had the advantage of requiring no argument to prove its pertinence, especially in Belgium, where there were still traces of former civic art. Soon it was necessary to change the title that the word "national" might be inserted, for the association had spread from Brussels to other cities. It met with some natural opposition, but it was able at the close of its second year to report two thousand members in the capital, the support of ten daily papers there, of one hundred burgomasters, aldermen, and councillors of the Brussels and Antwerp delegations, and of seventy-eight

senators and representatives, without distinction of political opinion. Also, its local branches received subsidies from the towns.

There is no need to dwell here on the internal organization or to detail L'Œuvre's history. Suffice it to say, that it made the "application of art to objects of public use," to the furnishings of the street, its special purpose. This it undertook to secure by the institution of competitions. And in the juries which made these prize awards, the council of L'Œuvre had only minority representation, that it might not be said the association had a "school" to found or any selfish purpose, and that progress toward the artistic ideal might be "left to the vigorous forces of contemporaneous activity." We have spoken of L'Œuvre's competition for the most beautiful house-front on a new street, and of its encouragement to artistic business signs. Here only its competitions for street utilities concern us.

In 1896, L'Œuvre made the decorative quality of apparatus for the public lighting the special subject of a crusade. The authorities of various cities were asked to designate public places which it was desired to light artistically, and L'Œuvre announced two competitions: One for "the idea," and one for the result of its actual execution. Eminent artists were appointed to the jury, and several of the designs then submitted were recommended later for production. One, of a single candelabrum for the Place de la Monnaie in Brussels, has been reproduced in different cities, and two other designs were accepted by the communes of Molenbeck

and Anderlecht. Aside from this definite gain, the competition had an influence not easy to measure. The organ of L'Œuvre declares that it had been the custom for superintendents of public works to order the city lighting apparatus from the illustrated catalogues of "international manufacturers." These offered the same type of post, of conventional design and careless proportion, for all cities of all countries — much, one imagines, as American villages are believed once to have ordered their soldiers' monuments. The better-informed authorities, the paper asserts, have no longer recourse to this cosmopolitan draughtsmanship; they now assign to worthy artists the task of producing designs appropriate for the city's new or transformed quarters. The competition for the lighting apparatus has been duplicated in the society's effort in behalf of more artistic flagstaffs, newspaper kiosks, etc.

In 1897, when the exposition was held in Brussels, the association pushed its campaign in behalf of beauty in the street utilities along yet another line, fitting up a section for a special exhibition of "public art." Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent, Liège, Namur, and many other cities, as well as Brussels, were called upon for exhibits, in original or reproduction, of their treasures, and so the section was rich in historical interest. It made also an inspiring demonstration of the aims of the society. Included in the display were full-sized models of new artistic devices for street lighting, designs for important restorations, projects for the renaissance

of particular forms of civic art, and plans for the splendid clearing out which was soon to reveal in worthy setting the architectural wealth of ancient Ghent. The department proved a popular feature of the exposition and did much to popularize this section of municipal art endeavor.[1]

Art dans la rue has thus gained in Belgium a support that it is difficult to appreciate in America. This is partly through the success of the exhibition, more largely through the persistency of the society's efforts, and from the daily public evidence of the truth and justice of its contentions, as revealed by the results achieved along the streets of Brussels and other cities. It has done far more than secure good-humored sufferance as a whim of artists, and even more than enthusiastic support from a small section of the public. It is taken as a matter of course by all the people. A significant consequence of this is seen in the effect on enterprises that do not pretend to formal enlistment in the movement. A trolley company, for instance, would not think of so violating the public ideal of the street as to erect such bare, crude poles as mar many leading thoroughfares in less fastidious communities. It would voluntarily make an attempt, even if not very successful in it, to give to the poles some beauty and grace.

In Paris regard for the artistic character of the street furnishings has devolved upon municipal officials. The city government is strictly paternal, and such is the jealousy with which all lines of

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 300.

effort are assumed by it that scant encouragement is given to individual initiative. The reader must already have suspected this to be true in the æsthetic field. The administration is a network of "commissions." In its organization civic beauty is placed alongside the public health, safety, well-being, as a goal not less desirable than they. Accordingly we find the Parisian local authorities patronizing art in many directions. In, for instance, the *Direction Administrative des Services d'Architecture et des Promenades et Plantations*, in the *Commission Administrative des Beaux-arts*, in the *Commission de Décoration de l'Hôtel de Ville*, in the *Commission de Surveillance des Musées Municipaux*, in the *Conseil d'Architecture*, in the *Service Technique du Plan de Paris*, and in many others, the greatest artists of Paris and the most expert connoisseurs are invited to do their share in an honorable official rôle toward making the city more beautiful. As in the matter of building very careful repression is supplemented by distinct artistic encouragement, so in all the affairs of the street there is, through the employment of artists, (1) surveillance of art and (2) incentive to it.

Kiosks for the sale of newspapers must be of a plan approved by the administration; the terms of the concessions for the street lavatories require that "their elevation shall present a decorative appearance in harmony with their surroundings," and that not so much as a notice shall be attached to one until the "model" of it has been approved by the director in charge of this service. The light-

ing apparatus must be of harmonious and artistic design, and must be kept in repair. The bronze lamp-posts, with their pleasing lines and artistic ornamentation, must be frequently washed and polished. The fence with which public work is screened from view is neatly painted and free from advertisements. The isolated letter-boxes are columns of ornamental iron, surmounted in the new model by a lantern to make them conspicuous at night, and were constructed from designs furnished by the chief architect of the city. The very street refuges, it has been remarked, are not only well adapted to their various sites, but are intended to be ornaments to the streets. The flag-staffs, the electric-light poles, the posts for single, double, and grouped lamps are of ornamental pattern, and public clocks with clear white faces are to be found at brief intervals on the lamp-posts or kiosks. Even the chairs in the parks or on the public way must, if controlled by *concessionnaires*, be kept in perfect repair and conform to a model approved by the administration.

It is clear that in Paris the movement for art in the street is in the hands of officials to an extent that is not paralleled in American cities and that almost arrests private initiative. The officials, as represented in the system of commissions, are as eager in its behalf as private individuals could be; while behind them there is such financial resource as to discourage competition. If there results from this a loss in the total energy put forth, it must be remembered that none of the effort is dissipated.

Indeed, the concentration may result in even greater efficiency. There are not many places where the matter could be left so satisfactorily to the public authorities, for it should be recalled that the whole system is the outcome of the French love for outdoor life and for the street. It is a strongly paternal government's reflection of a truly popular desire to have Paris beautiful.

Such organized effort as has appeared in the United States to give beauty to street necessities is mainly in the hands of the municipal art societies. There are not many of these, but it means a good deal that there should be any. And they are so young that one can believe the movement only beginning. The easiest way to describe their activity is to say that these societies attempt to do in their field the work which L'Œuvre Nationale Belge does for the street furnishings of Belgian cities. But their energy and influence are of course proportionate to their much more moderate size, and considerable of the energy is expended for the internal decoration of public buildings. In smaller communities, and sometimes in restricted areas of large cities, local or street improvement associations do work on similar lines. A Municipal Art Society was organized in New York in 1893 and enlarged in scope in 1898. One was established in Cincinnati in 1894; they appeared in Cleveland, Chicago, and Baltimore in 1899; and so it goes. The societies that are nominally less ambitious begin with village improvement associations, which spread

their efforts through a field so wide that the street furnishings get little.

Until the Municipal Art Society of the city of New York adopted its new constitution in 1898, it was dependent upon the subscriptions of its members for funds wherewith to provide decorations for public buildings and streets. These are costly, and one series of mural paintings and a small share in a bit of street memorial sculpture were all that it secured. By the new constitution it obtained power to organize competitions for works of art for the execution of which it did not pay. It took as its interestingly suggestive motto the phrase, "To make us love our city, we must make our city lovely," and it extended its function by offering prizes for the most artistic street-lamps, benches, flagpoles, shelters, etc. The latter competition was instituted in the winter of 1899, in response to the need for a shelter for street-car patrons transferring at the corner of Seventh Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street. Three hundred dollars were offered in two prizes. For a competition in 1898 for an ornamental flagstaff and pedestal in front of the city hall, the society offered $700 in three prizes. The society has not always succeeded in securing the execution of the work it approves; but at least it impresses the lesson that street furnishings should be more than merely utilitarian. It urges, also, that where the municipality does not avail itself of the expert judgment thus gratuitously obtained, private generosity may well be guided by the verdicts. The Cincinnati society, founded a year

after the New York, was closely modelled on the latter's original constitution. Its activity was confined to interior decorations and is not, therefore, pertinent to this chapter. The Cleveland organization was founded particularly to promote interest in the group plan for the new public buildings. Baltimore's society was very flourishing from the start. In its first week four persons paid $1000 each for the title of "art patron," and less than a year after incorporation it had six hundred members. It conducted, in December, 1899, a conference attended by municipal art-workers from all parts of the United States. The Chicago society is advocating beauty in street utilities and in signs, and the harmonious grouping of buildings.

The less spectacular work of the smaller associations often consists of merely protest. A lamp-post is neglected and becomes an eyesore, a telegraph or other pole is placed where it has no business, and the neighborhood organization makes objection and if necessary presses the complaint. In Evanston, Illinois, some time ago, the city council was asked to provide street signs. The council, declaring its willingness to do so, asserted that it had no available funds. Thereupon the Judson Avenue Improvement Association, followed by those of other streets, announced that at its own expense it would furnish neat and attractive signs, for which the council might reimburse it at a more convenient season. The instance is a type of a sort of effort by these smaller, less aspiring, but very practical organizations. They make little display and offer

scant encouragement to creative imagination, but they are loyal to a fixed ideal. In the battle for civic art theirs is an important task. The municipal art societies lead the way, take new redoubts, carry the standards farther forward. Upon these other organizations, representing the main army, which is public opinion, rests responsibility for bringing up the support and holding the ground that is gained. Very few municipal art societies, distributed among the large cities, would suffice, if everywhere there were local associations eagerly noting each step of progress and rallying to the holding of it.

In reviewing the endeavor to make beautiful what has been so long the commonplace in civic life, one thing is visible. It may be seen alike through the three distinct forms of the effort, in Belgium, Paris, and the United States. That is, the realization that the duty and the hope rest with the people. All the workers in this line of municipal art have perceived that the matter concerns the public. In Paris the task is arrogated by the public officials only as they would execute the will of the people. In Belgium it is in the hands of a national society subsidized by the towns, and of membership open to everybody. In the United States the effort is still for the most part educational only. To keep in touch with the public, to arouse its interest and so to create a popular demand, is the aim of all the societies. Public interest is apprehended to be the one hope of public art.

Nor has this, when awakened in the past, ever failed to inspire a worthy achievement.

In the discussion of the æsthetic possibilities in business signs there was mention of color for city streets. This opens another line of endeavor in the cause of artistic cityhood, for color doubtless should have an important part in the city beautiful. The smoke nuisance removed, there is the blue of the sky for white buildings to show against, as presented by the color scheme of the modern classic. There are also the bright hues of nature with their undertone of verdure, as made much of in the gardens of Babylon, these primal elements lending beauty to the modern village street. In succeeding chapters will be noted what nature can do for the streets of cities. The façades of Italian cities are painted, even to-day, in bright colors. The red tiles of their roofs add another touch, to be found much farther north, and make reminder of the color symphonies which architects can play in the use of the familiar building materials. And always, until the last century, there have been gay, varied, and fantastic costumes to give color and life to streets. It is only within a hundred years, indeed, that the urban highway has become a monochrome, dull and dingy.

Yet we have still the sky, the blue sea, and nature's lavishness in tree and shrub and flower, in clay and stone, where we will use them. Art in the street has, and will still further, put color on our signs; and the beauty with which we are to

clothe necessities will not disregard this opportunity. Already there are distinctive colors for the fire-alarm and mail boxes; and it has been proposed in London that each parish have a color of its own, as have the different services of the city. To all this there are the fluttering flags to be added, and the many colors of the vehicles on the public way. There are the arms of the city, to be emblazoned on municipal structures; and the city flag, to fly in gay contrast with the national ensign. We have lost the picturesque bright raiment, and must watch with care the painting of façades; but we need not fear that civic art will not put again the witching touch of color on city streets. Art and beauty for the thoroughfare cannot stop with a mere regulation of design. Color in exterior decoration has been made a feature already in the later expositions, and expositions create popular ideals. A "color scheme"—complete even to the clothes poles—has been worked out for an industrial community in New York State, and has been adopted, with the result that not a single color jars, that variety is moulded by harmony.

CHAPTER VII

THE TREE'S IMPORTANCE

IN the mental picture of a beautiful city or village, the tree has an inseparable part. Tree-lined avenues, tree-arched streets, the background of foliage to well-placed sculpture, the softening of stern façades, the play of light and shadow on the pavement, the screening of the sun's glare upon walk and window, the lovely chronicle of the season's progress as it is written on the tree where all can read it — these are factors of beauty thrusting themselves at once upon the mind as requisite to success. They are universal in appeal. They speak only of the beauty of all trees, they record the æsthetic dependence of the town upon its trees, without considering the supplemental influence of single specimens which may be gratifying to the eye for grace, loved for beauty or splendor, for associations, and age. The tree-impersonal is a mighty factor in city beauty, and a hundred or a thousand trees-personal supplement its power.

If the tree, then, be so important an element in

urban beauty, why has its value been so long disregarded; how comes it that popularly the tree's planting and care are still so neglected, that rich cities submit to miles of treeless thoroughfares, and that good neighborhoods have been content with a few straggling specimens? Happily, these questions tend more and more to apply to the past. In history we shall find a partial answer.

When citizens were huddled together for protection and the streets were too narrow for the traffic, there was no room for trees. If one survived, it was an accident, and there came to be a notion, as the years went on and the first cause was forgotten, that there must be something incompatible between trees and cities. So the bareness of the town was taken for granted and caused no surprise. In the new rise of cities, when villages have grown by natural accretion into towns and are no longer compressed by walls, more trees remain. The old notion is proved false. But the idea that the street tree is private, not communal, property has long continued, and the householder has done as he pleased with the tree at his door. Yet its civic value is appreciated in some measure, and one fails to find it planted more universally only because such patience is required for results. A man paints his house, or lays a new sidewalk, and holds his head higher because he has done something for his neighbor's good as well as his own. But as to putting out trees, whose full beauty he may not live to enjoy, that is a demand upon public spirit which too often staggers him.

Still, civic arboriculture, always its own best pleader, has made a long stride in the popular esteem. Whole streets appear beautifully planted, and now and again they are so many that a city boasts of its lovely possession and gains no little fame from it. A sub-title is assumed, or bestowed, in honor of the trees, and we read of "the Elm City," or "the Forest City." And then, at once, the victory for city trees is almost won. The old assumption that they would not grow in towns is abandoned; the long process of the years is seen to be worth the patience it requires; and the question rises for serious discussion as to whether the tree on the street should be considered public or private property, should be subjected to public or private care.

Opinions differ regarding the proper responsibility for trees on city streets. The one view vests all right and title to the tree in the owner of the property before which it stands. The tree is likened to the bush in the garden or to the gate-post. It is considered in its relation to the house and the individual, not in its relation to the street and the community. The other asserts that the trees belong to the city at large and that the individual has no more right to the tree in front of his own house, to determine whether it shall be removed or pruned, than has any other citizen. The view absolves also the obligation to plant that from which others will get the greater enjoyment.

This latter view is still, probably, the less com-

mon. It appears only with earnest recognition of the value of the tree to the community; with the appreciation that it is a highly useful and decorative part of the street furnishing, which years of growth are required to create, though an hour's thoughtless work may destroy it, and that the tree whose life is spared may bless several generations of individuals. The theory of the municipal ownership of trees, or a modification of it which vests their control in the municipality though individuals still "own" them, is therefore found where the trees are most valued as urban ornaments. It is extending as regard for civic æsthetics spreads. It is the theory of such notable cities as Paris and Washington, and of the general law of Massachusetts.[1]

In Washington, where the street trees number some eighty thousand, they are in the care of a special city commission. A law of New Jersey makes a similar provision there; and in Savannah, when severe storms destroyed many of the fine trees, the citizens took like action, appointing a Tree Commission to restore to the streets their lost beauty. In such management of the trees the expense is paid from the city treasury and in some cases the commissions even maintain nurseries. Numerous communities, less lavish, restrict their commission to a single officer, who is called a "forester" or warden.

[1] *Vd.* in Appendix the interesting Massachusetts act of 1899. The New Jersey law of 1893 and the New Hampshire act of 1901 are scarcely less interesting or suggestive.

In yet other cities where the theory of municipal control is approved, the trees are put in charge of the Park Commission. This was the policy of Duluth when, awakening to æsthetic aspirations, it made the provision of trees a city charge and required the Park Commission to satisfy a want that ought not to have existed. A like policy is seen in the enactment of the uniform charter which went into effect January 1, 1900, in New York State, for the cities of Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, and Troy; and efforts were made in 1899 and in 1900 to enact a law that would effect the same result in New York.[1] In still other cities of the United States, this rule is made to apply only to particular streets—as lately to Commonwealth Avenue, in Boston. The difference is one of degree, not of principle. A certain thoroughfare is held, in the one case, to be so important an æsthetic asset of the city, that the care of its trees should rest not in private hands, but in representatives of the whole community; in the other case it is held that every street may be an æsthetic asset.

The advantages of municipal control of street trees are several. They are negative, in that it prevents ruthless destruction or careless neglect. They are positive, theoretically, in that trees are thus recognized as factors of importance in the health, the comfort, and the beauty of a city; and practically, in that the planting of the trees is then done systematically and economically, in that

[1] Ohio enacted a general city law to this effect in 1901. Minneapolis asks only a majority petition on any street.

scientific care is secured for them, and in the fact that harmony in planting may be attained by adherence to definite designs for streets and neighborhoods. Moreover, the system of central responsibility and supervision is much more comprehensive. Trees are often most needed where property owners least appreciate their value.

Let us turn to Paris, where the theory of municipal control is highly elaborated: The street trees number almost a hundred thousand, though the city is compact, and about sixty thousand dollars a year is expended upon them. For this expenditure Paris secures rows of trees on all streets that have a width of twenty metres or more (sixty-five and a half feet), and on most of her broad thoroughfares there is a middle strip planted with trees. On the Champs Elysées there are many rows, the parks are full of them, and the quays are planted with them. Under the trees, seats are provided by the city and its *concessionnaires*—the latter charging only two cents for a chair, and the city providing nearly ten thousand free. Thus the whole city may be said to have a park-like character.

Perfection of system explains the economy with which such a result is gained. The municipality maintains a large nursery for trees, and makes use of a very ingenious device for so transporting those well grown that they can be successfully replanted. This has enabled it to establish an interesting tree hospital, and in the spring and fall it is no unusual sight to see trees that need the tonic of fresh air

and a more invigorating diet on their way to the hospital. As a consequence one does not find on Paris streets trees that show signs of decay, nor does one find the symmetry of the vista spoiled by an unexpected vacancy or the planting of a sapling where a larger growth had been. And at this expenditure, also, the city secures excellent care of the trees while they are on the streets. Nearly every one is protected by a slight cast-iron or stick basket, and is provided at the base with an iron grating some six feet wide which prevents the surface of the ground from becoming hard around the trunk on even the busiest thoroughfares. Beyond question, communities that wish to put their trees in charge of an official commission can learn much from Paris; and if there be a notion that trees are out of place on a crowded highway, personal investigation there is likely to dispel it. If this be unattainable, we have English testimony. Philip Gilbert Hamerton, in speaking of such new boulevards of Paris as the Haussmann or the Malesherbes, tells his countrymen that whatever their pride may be in Oxford Street or Piccadilly, they now will have to "confess that here is the ideal street" for temperate climates.

The principal criticism one can make of the trees in the Paris streets, is that their arrangement is very formal, and that the trees themselves are too small. As to the first condition, formalism as opposed to naturalism in landscape architecture is of course a matter of taste. Paris does not, at least, go as far as some of the Italian cities in cutting and

training street trees into grotesquely artificial forms. The second, and more serious condition, appears to be due to crowding and pruning; it should therefore be easy to avoid.

In the American cities where care of the trees has been delegated to representatives of the community at large, several general decisions of importance have been reached. An early discovery is that no city can count upon getting more than suggestions from the experience of another. When it has been said that street trees should have symmetry of growth, stateliness, ample foliage, cleanliness, and hardiness (which means, for one thing, that they should not be planted too closely); that they should be free from offensive odors and in Northern cities should be usually deciduous, so that the wonder of spring may be an annual miracle, one has said about all that can be said of general application. The Tree Commissioners of Washington, having laid down substantially these essentials, experimented with some thirty varieties. Now nearly all the trees of the city can be included in ten or twelve varieties.

Another, more specific, decision is that it is well in new planting to alternate trees of rapid growth with those which mature more slowly. The gain here is in securing shade and beauty on the street in the interim before the slower trees reach maturity. As the latter increase in size and demand more room, the temporary trees, which have then served their purpose, can be cut out. Thus, if magnolias on a residential street be alternated with

elms, the street will be beautiful from the first. When the elms have grown to large size, the magnolias can be removed with no impairment of the beauty of the street.

A third point is that increased stateliness, impressiveness, and charm are usually secured if the permanent, and therefore larger, trees on any given thoroughfare be of one variety. A street of elms is pleasanter to the eye than one of elms and maples mixed. A street of maples loses its symmetry when horse-chestnuts are interspersed. This conclusion by no means involves a planting of one kind of tree throughout the municipality. Indeed, a most important discovery is that different sections of the same city, though having like general characteristics, often are favorable to the growth of entirely different sorts of trees. Perhaps it ought to be said here that where there is uniformity in the planting the consequences of attack by disease or insects tend to be more serious; and that it is somewhat difficult to maintain the completeness which is essential to success in uniformity. But the whole theory of central control is based on an assumption of painstaking care and tireless watchfulness. It puts these things in reach if there be popular demand for them, and the statelier arrangement ought therefore to be advocated. The argument that there should not be a city forester or a tree commission because some of our cities, in securing incompetent service, have paid the usual penalty for purely political appointments, is to be as promptly dismissed as would an argument against

municipal government in all matters because it so often fails. Perhaps it were well, however, to urge at once that a city tree commission, whether it consist of one person or a dozen, ought, more emphatically than even the park commission, to be so taken out of the realm of politics that merit alone will determine appointments. If worse comes to worst, the parks are more or less isolated and out of the way. Failure with the trees has a result as long-lived, and they are of the city's very tissue.

A fourth point is hardly to be dignified as more than a suggestion; but it has much to recommend it from an educational basis. It is that labels (artistic in appearance and inconspicuous) be attached to the trees on the streets as well as in the parks. The proposal is connected only indirectly with civic æsthetics, though knowledge is, indeed, a help to love. An objection arises where the whole street is planted with the same kind of tree, in which case there would be needless repetition. Yet if the date of each tree's planting be added to its name, may there not be so created an emulation along the way, and an interest in individual trees, that will redound largely to the public guardianship and care for them?

With these principles in mind, it appears that in communities where the ownership of trees is vested wholly in private property-holders, the city might do a good thing if, to those who express a wish to set out trees, it would give the plants.[1] The trees need cost the city but a few cents each, and it

[1] Several cities—most notably Denver—have since taken up this idea with great success.

would be economical to secure their planting at so little expense. There would be the further advantage that an unconscious control could be exercised. The city would give only those that were best adapted to the climate and best suited to the city, and if desired it could limit to a single variety the trees for a particular street. On the other hand, the sensation of getting something for nothing would make the plan popular with householders, and probably many trees would be set out. The city would teach the lesson that the whole community was interested in the planting and was benefited by it. Much more, also, might be made than now of Arbor Day in the United States. It ought in all cities to be a day of civic observance.

But the problem of securing trees in cities is still generally that of interesting and guiding a multitude of individuals, with whose tree-planting vagaries and neglect the municipality does not interfere. Indirectly, no doubt, the experience of the cities that have gone into the subject with science and system is proving helpful. The lessons which they have learned by study and experiment are accepted by individuals, and so the pruning and planting of trees by private owners is generally less erratic and unwise than might have been feared. And nowhere is there a lack of authorities to consult. There is a copious supply of literature on the subject. The tree-planting societies publish most specific information in their bulletins and in the newspapers, and sometimes diagrams for the guidance of private planters, so that there may be system after all. The Brooklyn

society, in a diagram of this kind, has contended very earnestly that eight trees, two at each corner, should be planted at street intersections. The object is to form a groined arch over both streets, where the dense shade would do the greatest good and the least harm; but the plan is destructive to vista unless the trees are trimmed very high.

In general, it can be said that the individual care of trees can come to little, from the standpoint of civic æsthetics, unless there be also co-operation and association. This gives greater power and the broader point of view. As was said in Giotto's Florence, the "noblest sort of heart is that composed of the united will of many citizens."

As most cities in the United States are a rapid outgrowth of villages, it is encouraging to note that regard for street trees has formed an important part of the creed of village improvement societies. To preserve old trees and to plant new while the community is small, and to teach that it can never grow big enough to slight them with reason or to let business elbow them away, is almost to assure good trees and large trees for the future city. A single person can start, and usually must start, the agitation that is to have so important a result.

The Laurel Hill Association, of Stockbridge, Mass., which is said to have been the first village improvement society in the United States, began its operations by planting more than four hundred trees in its first year, by offering prizes for their planting by others and rewards for evidence leading

to the conviction of those who injured the trees. This was in 1853, and the activity is now fairly typical. Some interesting minor differences, however, can be illustrated.[1] At North Adams, such an improvement society obtained appropriations from the town for the planting of trees by the roadside and in public places, it marked the trees of particular interest, and offered prizes to children for the eggs of destructive caterpillars. In Brookline, a wealthy resident gave two thousand dollars a year for several years on the condition that the town duplicate the amount and that a portion of it be annually spent in tree planting. At Aiken, S. C., the Village Improvement Society appointed a committee on the planting of pine trees, and it has performed a magnificent work. In other cases, prizes have been offered by private persons for the best rows of new planting. Each of these lines of effort is rich in result and may be commended.

In the large cities, the number of persons affected gives to the like movement a pathetic side. It is such a pity that any modern cities should have lacked adequate provision with trees. If once the trees be present, they are their own most eloquent pleaders. Hence it is no surprise to find them a general charge, as we have seen in the case of Savannah, where the city has had an opportunity to learn their urban value. But a type of many American cities is that which was short-

[1] *Vd.* suggestive and valuable article on "Village Improvement Societies," by Mary Caroline Robbins, published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1897.

sightedly planned on the old, old model, with no trees in its streets. The community is not stirred, hardly realizing what is lost, and it remains for public-spirited individuals to do what might be done more comprehensively by the city. At this juncture the tree-planting associations appear. They are supported by the small annual dues of members, and make it possible for any one to secure the planting of a tree before his property without further trouble than the mailing of a printed form.

Of these societies the most conspicuous are probably those of Brooklyn and Manhattan, New York. The latter was founded only in 1896, but in the single year of 1900 it reported four thousand trees set out through its efforts. Nothing but the need and vastness of the field can make that showing look small. The former association is probably the best known in the United States. The activity of these societies is very great also along the lines of popular education and advice. They publish full information as to the variety of tree most suitable for selection, as to how and when to plant, where to obtain the trees, and the cost of the work; they distribute circulars regarding the care of trees, call attention to any threatened injury by insects, and recommend safeguards. The Brooklyn society has also published circulars addressed to children, enlisting their interest in street trees; and it is claimed that one of its circulars on the injury which horses may do by gnawing the bark was put in the hands of practically every horse owner and driver in the city. The societies have also become inter-

ested in legislation for the protection of trees, especially in that which would prohibit the affixing of advertisements, and they have made familiar, first in pictures and then in reality, the wonderful æsthetic transformation when a city block, previously bare of trees, has been planted with them.

There are other tree-planting societies. When one was formed in Buffalo in the early winter of 1898 it was asserted by a speaker at one of the meetings that for almost thirty years the city had had authority to plant trees and assess the cost to the lot owner, if the latter failed to plant them himself, but that it had never once exercised this right. The instance is a good illustration of how little worth are ordinances, if public opinion does not earnestly support them. In Indianapolis, an interesting work in arboriculture has been done by women who, banded in the Park Memorial Tree Association, plant memorial trees with appropriate ceremonies. In Rochester some years ago, when the city's shade trees were threatened with destruction by worms, a crusade of school children against the cocoons was inaugurated by the Genesee Valley Forestry Association. Prizes were offered, the attack was two or three times renewed, each time with extravagant success, and danger passed. A like course has been adopted in Buffalo and other cities. In Kansas City a Tree Planters' Society was formed in the spring of 1899, and it is claimed that in a year seven thousand trees were set out, and five thousand more provided for. In St. Louis

the Real Estate Exchange has lately appointed a tree-planting bureau.

Much is accomplished also by associations of general purpose, which take up tree planting as only one department of their activity, as do the village improvement societies. In Boston, for instance, there are suburban neighborhood associations which furnish trees to any citizens who apply for them, at no other cost than the promise to plant them in proper alignment and in good soil. The strong Civic Club (of women) in Philadelphia, has had for several years a "committee on forestry." The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association of London does a great deal of tree planting, and the Cockburn Association in Edinburgh, making civic beauty its object, lays emphasis year after year in its report on the value of trees for the adornment of cities. It has said, rather significantly, that "when the work of the association first commenced (1875) the planting of trees on the broad thoroughfares of the city was scarcely dreamt of," and it quotes this quaint bit of advice from an old-time Scotch laird, speaking to his son, "Be aye stickin' in a bit tree. The trees will be growin' when ye are sleepin'."

The result of the Cockburn Association's experience, it may be well to add, is that it urges, after long consideration and expert advice, that the city retain a forester. The Brooklyn Tree Planting Association, which has thrown the weight of its influence in behalf of the theory of private ownership for street trees, urges the establishment of

neighborhood clubs and then the employment of foresters, who shall be workers, not merely overseers, for the small districts. It believes that "if a city be divided into sections in such a manner, the foresters will take great interest and a commendable rivalry will arise." A few such clubs have been established. They have the advantage of providing the co-operation so necessary where the control rests with individuals.[1] The annual report for 1897–98 of the City Improvement Society of

[1] The plan of the Brooklyn association is for districts of one thousand lots. The residents of these, combining for united action, would employ a forester. It says: "Allowing him a salary of one thousand dollars a year and an additional sum, say one hundred dollars, to secure assistance where two are necessary for any particular work, as in spraying, pruning, and removing large trees, would secure an able and active man. Should such a system of organizations be established, men competent to take the position of forester would be forthcoming. Such a system would inspire foresters to learn all they could about trees and their management, and they would have a just pride in the appearance of their section. Incompetency would be followed by dismissal. After the removal of undesirable trees and planting new ones where needed, an assessment of $1.10 per lot per annum would insure excellent care of trees and relieve people from further trouble. One thousand lots twenty feet wide would furnish room for five hundred medium-sized trees, which should be set forty feet apart. Large-growing trees should be placed still farther apart. There may be some small ornament between trees. Although trees are on alternate lots, every lot has an equal interest in them and should contribute for their maintenance." The point of view is, of course, that of a densely built-up city. Broader lots would mean fewer residents in the area and perhaps one or more trees before every lot.

Denver says: "Our committee, after long study of methods adopted in the older towns and cities, advocate the appointment of a city forester, to whom shall be given the sole right to prune the trees outside the lot line." In Massachusetts a law passed in 1899 requires each town of the State to elect a tree warden. In Connecticut the State Agricultural Society has urged the appointment of foresters by cities.

In the discussion of trees for cities, the effort here has been to keep in mind only their æsthetic importance. The argument in their behalf can, however, be greatly strengthened by consideration of their sanitary value. The foliage inhales carbonic acid and exhales oxygen. As a result, the diseases incidental to heat are less prevalent in streets where there are large trees. The leaves absorb, also, the poisonous gases generated by the decomposition of animal and vegetable matter in hot weather. Their shade, which is pleasant to see, is also cool. There is less direct heat and less reflected heat; while in winter the trees actually radiate warmth.

The importance of this sanitary value of trees to cities is illustrated by the following resolution, passed at a meeting of the New York County Medical Society: "Resolved, That one of the most effective means for mitigating the intense heat of the summer months and diminishing the death rate among children is the cultivation of an adequate number of trees in the streets." It may

be illustrated further by the fact that the bill which was presented to the legislature in 1899, to put the care of the street trees of New York City in charge of the Park Commissioners, was drawn by a physician, a member of the State Board of Health, and was introduced as a merely sanitary measure. Here again, therefore, the requirements of modern hygiene give a substantial basis to the appeal of municipal æsthetics. Each is stronger for the other's aid.

A popular recognition of the sanitary importance of trees on city thoroughfares may lighten the labors of the workers for city beauty, but it will not relieve them of the need of activity in behalf of this indispensable phase of urban decoration. It will be still incumbent upon them to choose the trees, to secure care and harmony in the planting, and watchful guardianship thereafter for the beauty of the street. The beautiful city cannot do without trees, trees that are graceful, strong, and numerous. Let us make, if we will, their sanitary value the basis for municipal control of them; but then, for the sake of their great possible beauty, they should be put in charge of a commission of expert knowledge and æsthetic ideals. Let us, finally, yield ourselves, in the city of all places, to the frame of mind which was Ruskin's in exclaiming, "What a thought that was when God thought of a tree!"



CHAPTER VIII

POSSIBILITIES OF GARDENING

THE phrase *rus in urbe* has long called up a pleasant picture. It has suggested an attainment of a goal like that of the homely saying about eating one's cake and having it still. But a change of significance has gradually taken place in the vision that the phrase presents: from the villa, garden-circled—like a flowery island in a city's ocean of brick and stone—we have passed to the thought of tree-lined streets, of walks grass-bordered, and of flower-jewelled squares. Selfishness has changed to civic pride with a triumph of philanthropy and sanitation. *Rus in urbe* is no more an island. It becomes a river, flowing through all the streets and by-ways, and forming in squares and parks little ponds and lakes of country. As Venice is said to ride the sea, so in the new picture *rus in urbe* means *urbs in rure.*

We have seen that vegetation is an important factor in the coloring of a town. Much more than that can be said of it. As appeared in the special case of trees, it has many hygienic merits. These

are not merely physical. The grateful effect upon the nerves of the shade of trees in summer, of the bright flowers in parks and window boxes, of the rich foliage of vines, is so akin to sensuous pleasure that it slips indistinguishably into the realm of æsthetic charm. The urban vegetation makes us happy and does us good, until we hardly know which effect comes first.[1] Calmly, coldly, critically regarded, it all gives color to city streets, softens architectural outlines, and so adds to city beauty. But, above all, the trees, flowers, and vines are beautiful in themselves and please on that account. We are children of nature, and it is a strange and pathetic thing that men should ever have thought that because mutual dependence huddled them together into cities they must leave the country behind, foregoing its easily gained delights. For the idea is almost recent that the country can be brought into the city and made common property. In the cities of classic days such a luxury belonged only to the rich and noble. From the mediæval cities, enclosed in walls and avoided by princes, the country was shut out, and men came to think that trees and flowers would not grow where the sun shone and the rain fell, where

[1] It may be worth while to note that in Detroit in 1899 upwards of three hundred thousand flowering plants, and more than five thousand vines, were set out by the city, in the boulevards and to dress city property. The record does not appear to have been that of an unusual year, nor out of proportion to the city's size; but one can imagine the aggregate result.

birds sang and little children played — if the place were called a city. When the walls had come down and there was room enough, vegetation was still neglected. It was because of that theory, and not on account of paving, of soot, or gas leakage, as we shame-facedly and untruly say in trying to justify a faith in inherited tradition, for these things are attributes of only modern cities. But the old municipalities had had an excuse to offer. They were usually not so large that the citizen could not get to the country when he pleased; and the entire lack of transit facilities justified his wish to live as near as might be to his daily business. The change that is bringing the country into the city is neither in the heart of man, nor in nature. It is economic, even mechanical. The blessing which rapid-transit has conferred upon humanity is the mingling it makes possible of the city and the country.

We shall have occasion to speak, in another place, of those parks and playgrounds that are the artificial lakes and ponds of the river of country, as it is encouraged to flow through modern cities. There will be enough to say here, if we try to picture only the joyous, health-giving, beautiful stream running through the long streets, eddying in little gardens around the homes, and laving the stern and bare façades of business blocks until "the Bride of the Sea" finds rivals in cities flower-decked and garlanded. Such pseudonymes as "the Garden City," or "the Flower City," should suggest marriages not less lovely, and more prac-

tical and appropriate, than was the poetic wedding of Venice to the Adriatic.

It must not be supposed that the attraction of parking and gardening is meant only for the outskirts of the city, that the river of country can flow through none but quiet streets when the need of its refined beauty and gentle influence is obviously great in the stress and turmoil of business. Even in sections as crowded as those in the heart of Paris, a middle strip of the roadway, or a strip on one or both sides, can be spared for planting with trees, and sometimes for sowing with grass and adornment with flowers.

When a new thoroughfare is to be opened, it is often well to plan for this, making the way broader than the traffic requires. Can it be thought that Paris is poorer for the width of the Champs Elysées and of her boulevards, or Berlin for the breadth of the Unter den Linden, which gains its very name from the middle decorative strip? Yet in each case the traffic is heavy and the property values high. The trees grow more easily here than on streets fully paved, beauty and attractiveness are added to the town, and almost always the enhanced value of the property on either side of a thoroughfare so improved is found great enough in itself to pay the cost of the extra width. Thus, without net loss, the city is made lovelier — and lovelier where the greatest numbers, and the most needing, can enjoy the change.

If a whole street cannot be treated in this way, a

short section may be. When a congested portion of Paris was torn out to make room for the Boulevard St. Germain, for instance, brief spaces appeared where the street was of uneven width. The narrowest point was taken as determining the proper alignment, and the space left over in the wider sections beyond one curb was then planted with double rows of trees. In this way the regularity of the street's perspective was maintained, and the thoroughfare yet had the benefit of a sense of broader space, as it would hardly have had if the extra area had been railed off into an exclusive park or "square." The alternative of attaching this area to the fronting buildings as gardens would shortly have meant construction upon it.

From a philanthropic standpoint, also, much can be thus gained. It would cost no more, when the opportunity offers, to give parking to a street through the tenement district than to lay out a new playground or "square." Assume the artistic results to be equal, which is granting more than is fair, and the former plan is best, for the domestic advantages to be secured by the parking of a street are larger than those to be gained by clearing out a block. We have, not flowers and grass that need to be fenced; but down the middle or side of the full length of street just a broad strip of earth planted with trees — a cool walk and a city children's paradise. The latter acquirement asks no apology. For the former, it may be said that the Latin races like to find out-of-doors their larger home. A writer, who was speaking of the typical

Parisian, might have been referring to a member of any of these races when saying: " He comes downstairs to the street; he descends to his thoroughfare as the millionaire expects to descend to his breakfast room or his study. Whatever the gloom of the house, his street, catering to his need of color, variety, beauty, and movement, helps him to feel good." And if his street does this, his town is the fairer. The city can well afford to yield to so innocent and joyous a need.

Yet, when all is said, parking—which is usually understood to mean treatment of the street with a strip of tree-planted lawn — is more particularly characteristic of high-class residence districts. It is well adapted to them, since the traffic there is lighter, the property value lower than in the business section, and the desire of the householder rather to be back from, than directly upon, the street. The city which puts a bit of greensward on the public way before a house, and plants it with several rows of trees, adds just so much to the front garden of that house; and if, as often now in the newer streets, the trees be supplemented by artistic groups of flowering shrubs and by beds of flowers, the householder's walk home ceases at that point to be purely urban. It is transformed into a garden walk. Cares and work are left behind so much the sooner, and the softening influence of nature's beauty calms the nerves and soothes the spirit. When a residence street is treated in this way, the householder who is unwilling to do his part in the maintenance of its beauty by caring for

his share of public lawn, is a species of short-sighted and selfish humanity which is yet to be discovered. As for the beauty of the city, what a stride it makes!

Were it necessary always to await municipal action, the localities improved by parking would be small. But the result can be attained in other ways. In the United States, some residence sections of St. Louis offer a conveniently emphatic illustration of the attainment of an oasis of *rus in urbe* by concerted effort on the part of private persons. They join together to establish a private park, and able, by united action, to resist the advance of trade, manufacture, or rapid-transit within the bounds of their domain, they charmingly situate handsome houses in grounds which are admirably laid out and perfectly maintained. Quiet and seclusion are thus secured. Fences are removed, and in the midst of the city there is created a bit of artistically planted country which not merely is beautiful in itself, but casts a gentle and pleasant influence far beyond its own limits.

In suburban property a like result may be gained, with greater ease, by owners of large estates wisely planning at the start for such development, laying out streets wide enough to permit of generous parking and lots broad enough for gardens. Since rapid-transit has made distant property desirable, this treatment rarely fails in a financial sense. So the advancing city does not press the country back, but goes to it with outstretched, open arms.

The telephone and trolley have, fortunately for the cause of beautiful cities, now broken down the barrier between the city and the country so effectually that even in outlying districts where rents are low æsthetic care appears. An important part, for instance, of the activity of the City and Suburban Homes Company of New York, is in the setting out of model neighborhoods. And these are planned in their entirety from an artistic point of view. A prospectus, which is a fair type of many, announces houses pretty in themselves, of varied but harmonious architecture, macadamized streets, " well-laid sidewalks, lines of shade trees, terraced sites, and a perspective of fifteen feet of lawn in front of the houses." Here is promised a " residence park " on a small scale.

Beauty in cities, however, owes much more to rapid-transit than if merely the acquirement of pretty suburbs were thereby rendered possible. Transit facilities not only break down the old barrier between city and country by leading the city into the country, but they entice the country into the city, which is a thing to be differentiated. Rapid-transit's first accomplishment is to widen the available residence area. When it has rendered a point four miles from the city hall no further distant in time than a point two miles from the centre had been, it has doubled the diameter of that area which is adapted to residence. There. results decrease in congestion. The space formerly in full demand for building may now spare

some inches for flowers and turf; the houses that must soon at least have been built in blocks may have gardens around them. The stream of country which is flowing through the broad streets, with all its attributes of welcome beauty — and with associations and moral influence worth more perhaps than is realized — has room to eddy around the homes. At once domestic gardening becomes an inevitably precious factor in city beauty.

The example of private residence parks, of parking by the city on a few streets, and of the artistic development of suburban property, has taught a lesson that is heeded. The wide brick sidewalks overgrown with grass, once found in the residence quarters of the older cities, give way to narrower cement walks with an orderly strip of grass between walk and curb; the front fences come down and the side fences as far as the building line. By a united action, none the less efficient because informal and unconfessed, old streets take on a new beauty. The gardens are put in the charge of landscape architects, experts who know how to group artistically, and the beauty thus secured becomes a new source of public pleasure. Let us make some extracts from a large group of suggestive and specific examples:

In Williamstown, Mass., some years ago, the people were persuaded to remove their front fences by a promise from Cyrus W. Field that he would personally present $10,000 to the Village Improvement Association when the last one had been taken down. In Brooklyn, where the Tree Plant-

ing and Fountain Association includes in its profession of objects the phrase, "and otherwise to render the city of Brooklyn attractive," the displacement of fences and conversion of courtyards into well-kept grass plots is one of the subjects of agitation. The removal of the wilderness of flagging around the old city hall there, in order that grass might be substituted, effected a change which the whole community applauded, though at first it was thought visionary and unpractical. In the suburbs the promoter of a new residence section is offering cash prizes for the greatest improvement in the home-grounds of his district. In Edinburgh, the Cockburn Association has made the abolition of the railings in front of public and other buildings, and the screening of unsightly erections with trees and vines, a detail of its crusade for city beauty. So, far and near, in public and private, there is recognition of the value of gardening, for its own beauty, and as an advantageous setting to architecture. It is adopted not only because the city orders it, or merely because a land-owner sees money in it, but because the people love grass and trees and flowers. And the progress, as ever, rests with the people.

There is an interesting expression, by the way, of national characteristics in the form taken by this private encouragement of nature in the city. Contiguous gardening and parking, which is so familiar in the streets of American cities, is almost unknown in Europe save where the latter is decreed by municipalities. Private persons, left to their own

resources, still indeed bring the country to their city homes; but like the nobles of long ago they hide it behind high walls, shut it out from the street with stone and brick, and give no more than a glimpse, over the top of the wall or through the gate, of the beauty they have secured and kept for themselves. The gardens do not blend indistinguishably into one another, and the lawns are not open to the street. That is a development left, not improperly, to a democracy. American civic beauty gains much by this. The street shut off from the house-gardens is only a walled lane and can be inexpressibly beautified if the walls be taken down. Then the narrow way is widened and has parking in spite of itself.

Similarly, the squares so common in the better residence quarters of London are enclosed by iron fences, to the gates of which the abutting householders alone have keys. A landlord, instead of laying out a broad street, with a strip of nature through its centre, has plotted his holding into squares. In the centre of each of these he has planted a common garden, and railed it about and locked the gate. Those tenants who want a playground for their children may pay for the privilege, as they pay already an extra rent because their front windows face trees instead of houses. Whatever civic beauty the garden gives, is plainly labelled "exclusive" by the fence. A sharp class distinction is drawn; and the beauty that should be municipal, and therefore free to all, is made a class, almost a personal, possession. The popular

loss is not of a square, but of parking and a vista of lawns, and there has been injected into municipal art an element of aristocracy which is utterly antagonistic to it.

If contiguous gardening be peculiar rather of those smaller cities where adornment by vegetation might be expected than of a metropolis, the duty of the private citizen in the latter is not lessened. Though there be no gardens, there yet must be domestic gardening. At worst, there are the front walls, the steps, and the window ledges; and nature in many a cañon shows how to give life, color, and gentle beauty to cold stone. There is no reason why even the closest built-up street should be a dreary gorge.

It is a rare façade in domestic architecture that cannot be beautified by the soft and clinging green of a vine. This will pick out and emphasize a good detail; it will soften lines; and half covering a crude device, it will reveal only enough to suggest something better than the reality. It will give beauty to a shadowy corner, warmth where all was cold; and now and then allowed free, luxuriant play, it will draw its protecting, beautifying cloak around a hideous exterior and make it fair and cool as the wall of a sylvan retreat. Perhaps, in its season, it will deck the ugly façade with fairy clusters and garlands of flowers.

Of late years the Japanese Ivy, sometimes called the Boston Ivy, on account of the enthusiasm with which it was adopted in Boston, has been a boon

to the streets of many cities. There is no doubt a tendency to plant it indiscriminately and to let it cover what were better shown; but on the whole, from an artistic standpoint, it has been a public benefactor. It covers blank walls, monotonous fronts, and meaningless eccentricities of structure with a waving curtain — of emerald in summer, of the sunset's glory in the fall, and always of nature's perfect taste. In its little leaves the summer wind plays as on the surface of the water, now disclosing hollows deep and cool, now lifting into the sunshine the crests of lighter green. It does not allow the memory of nature to pass from city streets; and since, from even the architectural standpoint, there are so many building walls that are far better when screened than shown, it is scant wonder that some urban societies have appeared for the encouragement of vine planting. The progress in this direction has been rapid, however, and the societies ought now to add, certainly in the case of the Japanese Ivy, instruction in pruning and discrimination in planting, to their general advocacy of the merits of vines.

For the growth of a vine there has to be a little earth at the base of the wall. Sometimes the flagging takes that away. Then the steps and window ledges alone remain, while the need of nature's brightening touch has grown so much the greater. For many years, on the steps of great houses in European capitals, it has been customary to have a formal arrangement of ornamental greenery. Italian laurel, dwarf cedars, English yew or haw-

thorne, or Dutch box, stands in green-painted tubs; and pansies or other little flowers fill sculptured vases. The device is expensive and makes no pretense of naturalness; but the straits are sore. The custom is working its way into the United States, and when there can be never so little of the free and careless play of nature, it is to be commended. It steals at least some hardness and monotony from close-set residence streets, or makes a fringe of wavering delicacy in the angle of pavement and wall. One noted, as a half-hidden beauty of the Columbian Exposition at Chicago, beds of pansies nestled against the façade of one of the largest buildings. The same touching and lovely wonder of contrast may be seen to-day on many a city street.

The adornment that can be thus given to steps and lower windows should be easier as one ascends. Window ledges of upper stories can be well spared for flowers where no one is expected to look in, and the available space that may be narrow on the porch itself is ample on its roof. In the old-world, where city gardens have not been constant urban elements, this opportunity is better valued and availed of than with us. London in summer is not the flowerless desert that it might so easily have been. June's profusion of geraniums and daisies is succeeded by a golden glory in July, and each summer month the dull façades are bright with the flowers of window boxes, in even the business sections, where they often rise tier on tier to the very roof. Through Germany one finds the same glad

decking of the streets. And if grim London thus adorns herself, one may be sure that smaller communities of England fairly revel in luxuriant window gardens.

Success in this phase of city adornment must depend, of course, on the people's natural love for flowers and skill in gardening. Yet something can be done artificially to stimulate this. Even in English villages one occasionally finds public competitions conducted with that purpose. In one town these have been endowed by a wealthy woman who set aside a little sum of which the annual income, amounting to £2 a year, was divided into three prizes: £1, 12*s.* and 8*s.* The conditions were that no one should compete who owned a greenhouse, small glass houses for forcing being much commoner in England than in towns of the United States; that the competition should include only one window in a house, thus putting the occupant of the smallest house on an equality with more prosperous neighbors, and that the general scheme of arrangement should be decided upon at least a month before the day set for awarding the prizes, and not altered during the month. This was to prevent a display of merely temporary excellence. There are three judges. Intense interest is taken, not only by the contestants in each other's windows, as the designs develop, but by all the residents of the town. It is a very sweet and pretty competition, not quite as much needed one would think in a town as in a city; but in English villages the best of the garden is behind a wall.

In Great Britain, also, the various Kyrle Societies make inducement to window gardening a regular section of their activity; and the Cottage Garden Societies of Ireland emphasize its philanthropic value.

Liverpool and Glasgow, as representatives of larger and therefore needier communities, have undertaken such encouragement to window gardening as a function of the municipality. In the latter city, for instance, five hundred window boxes of flowers were prepared by the superintendent of parks, and the householders in the more congested districts were invited to borrow them, that color might be thus brought to the streets of the "dark sea-born city." A deposit of a shilling was required when the loan was made, with the understanding that the money would be refunded on the return of the box at the end of the summer. In Hamilton, Canada, the Municipal Improvement Association has offered prizes amounting in 1900 to $250 for the most artistically decorated lawn on certain main streets of the city, and also prizes for the finest window gardens. In the United States competitions of like purpose have been conducted by village improvement societies; and in cities, as a half-philanthropic and half-educational movement, flower seeds are sometimes distributed to children of the tenements. The gain here is in the brightening of the room and the lessons in tenderness, care, awe, and reverence — even to God. But because fresh air and sunlight are to be found only by the window the plants also brighten the street. At the time of the Democratic National

Convention of 1900 in Kansas City, a local newspaper offered a large prize for "the prettiest lawn of twenty-five feet or over." In a rush of civic pride, public-spirited citizens took up the matter. Soon twenty-six prizes, reaching a total of $1200, were offered for well-kept lawns, floral displays, "the neatest vacant lot," etc., that the city might be beautified. There was a good lesson in that. In Cleveland the Home Gardening Association does a remarkable work of this kind among the public school children. The president has described its aim as, "The clearing of the streets and alleys of rubbish, the planting of shrubs and flowers in otherwise unsightly places, and the brightening and beautifying of home surroundings, especially in crowded districts." The association sells penny packages of easily grown flowering annuals to such pupils as wish to buy them. On each package there are printed suggestions. In its first year so many thousand packages were sold that the society was at once self-sustaining. Flower shows are held in the schools at the end of the summer.

When domestic gardening has done its utmost, there yet remain large pieces of property which neglect may make an eyesore, or which some care and forethought will render powerful factors in the beautifying of the town. Of these are the grounds of corporations and even of the municipality itself. In Minneapolis, as a type of a successful negative action, the threat of the Russian thistle pest induced the Improvement League to offer prizes to school children for the plant's extermination. An

illustration, now somewhat famous, of a result that is positive has been offered in Dayton, Ohio. Here a manufacturing company moved into a squalid neighborhood and beautified its own grounds, ornamenting them on plans furnished by an expert landscape gardener. The whole neighborhood was so influenced by the example, and by the company's offer of liberal prizes for the best front and back yards, window boxes and porches, as to be very shortly redeemed. Indeed, a claim was made that the street on which most of the employees lived, considering its length and the cost of the houses, was the prettiest in the world. It cannot be expected that influence of this sort will be always so striking; but there will be at least the addition of the beauty of the company's own grounds to the attractiveness of the street and town.

Of a strong and similar interest, there is that adornment which ought, for other sufficient reasons, to be given to school yards; that beauty which the Northern races lavish on their cemeteries; and finally the decoration now becoming a characteristic of the railroad's border, where it is within the limits of a town. We shall speak of the school yards more appropriately in the chapter on playgrounds. As to the railroads, several include among their regular workers a landscape gardener and his staff. The matter is unquestionably regarded from a strictly business basis. A line of track bordered with neatly kept turf, and embellished around the station with trees, shrubbery, grass plots, and

flowers, is held to be an excellent advertisement. Since incidentally it does much for the beauty and attractiveness of a city, this economic argument is to be approved, for it has suggestion for other corporations. As to the city's own property, the little squares, and the ornamental circles in the street, it need scarcely be said that they should not be fenced. If any artificial barrier between lawn and careless traffic is required, a low stone coping will suffice. The beauty that the small area may have will be more than twice as effective if, unenclosed, this space becomes, as in Washington, a decorative element of the street. We can learn that lesson from the examples in London of an opposite policy.

In considering in necessary detail the opportunities for embellishing with grass and flowers, doubtless sight has been lost, to some extent, of the adornment of the city as a whole, of the aggregate effect. It is as though in talking of the beauty which trees lend to city thoroughfares we had had to consider them separately and speak only of the attractiveness added to each lot. The entrance of the country into the city we have likened to the flow of a river. Each beauty of a wavering line of shore may be noted, but when all is said the majesty and grace of the river belong mainly to the perspective, to the long view. So it is in urban gardening, in parking, with vine, tree, window box, the beauty of the single example is outshone by the beauty of the whole.

In his essay on gardening, Bacon remarks:

"Man shall ever see that when ages grow to Civility and Elegancy, man comes to build stately sooner than garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection." His rule has held good in the rise of cities. There was attempt to make them handsome before they were beautiful. The soft and gentle touch of nature has been the last to be added to them; and much of that impulse may be traced to the new regard for hygiene and to the modern appeal of philanthropy. Invention (in rapid-transit) has then made feasible the satisfaction of a wish to beautify, and has revealed in urban gardening æsthetic merits not fully anticipated. Philanthropy and hygiene have given the impulse; but henceforth the strongest champion for *rus in urbe* should be a popular desire to bring beauty into cities.



CHAPTER IX

PARKS AND DRIVES

NON-POLITICAL altruism — which is altruistic effort that does not make government its object — may be said to divide its activity into three great groups of effort. These are the movements, respectively, to make the world better, wiser, and fairer, and they find in the density of city population an attractive and urgent field. Comprised in the first group is all philanthropic effort, in the second all educational, in the third the æsthetic endeavor. No hard and fast line separates the three. Many a philanthropic enterprise has educational purpose as well, while in art-education the second movement is firmly joined to the third. Viewed from different standpoints, one altruistic deed gives various blessing.

It is little wonder, therefore, that the mighty engine of modern philanthropy should be found to do much for city beauty; that, viewed from the standpoint of civic æsthetics, it should prove a powerful ally to the latter, though all the time its friends seek primarily other ends. Thus an impor-

tant division of the work for beauty in cities is directly traceable to its impulse. Parks, playgrounds, and institutional construction present, perhaps, the most obviously æsthetic phase among the achievements of urban philanthropy. They are large accomplishments and have a striking effect on the aspect of the town.

Since the rise of artistic concern, the æsthetic advantages of parks have had as great an emphasis as the philanthropic. Located, for the sake of economy, almost always on the outskirts of a city, the parks are far, in the main, from the crowded districts. In Boston, for example, which has now the most complete system of any municipality in the United States, the reservations of Middlesex Fells, of the Blue Hills, and even of Franklin Park, are quite out of town, and, like the large park acreage lately reserved in the Bronx district of Greater New York, are plainly designed to add beauty to the present and future city rather than to benefit its poor. Significant also is the fact that nearly all parks of large towns and cities are put under the direction of skilled engineers and landscape architects. At an added expense that would secure some acres in the tenement district, an effort is made to increase the beauty of the parks.

There is happily no need to present here the arguments in favor of parks for cities, nor is it necessary to go deeply into the history of the movement in their behalf. This has arisen lately and has gained strength rapidly, until the assertion is made to-day

that parks and park systems are the most important artistic work which has been done in the United States. Before we pass, however, to the principles of park construction and maintenance which belong to civic æsthetics, it may be well to pause for an observation in regard to the connection of the parks with this general movement. We have spoken of the demand for them as if it were an effect only of the rise of regard for city beauty. To some extent it is also a cause.

"In the growth of taste," says a writer, "no educator of the people has been more valuable than the parks. Their attractiveness is undoubtedly one of the causes of that everywhere increasing desire for more perfection in home surroundings." If the adoption of parks be due, then, to a somewhat vague demand, not untinged with socialism, for civic beauty, they react in giving definiteness to the demand and in enforcing the lesson of personal opportunity. A beautiful park may awaken a desire for a lovelier home-garden, and the wish for a beautiful home grows into the wish for a beautiful street. The efforts to bring vegetation into the city owe something, therefore, to the parks. And if these efforts have grown rapidly, though only come to consciousness in late years, let it be realized that when, in 1853, the purchase was authorized of lands for Central Park, New York, the acquisition and development were most bitterly opposed; that in 1869 there were but two well-advanced rural parks in the whole United States; that in 1856 there were only twenty. In 1878 a

student of park development who had been in communication with the twenty-five principal American cities wrote to the author that, except in the larger, the rise of a "general" interest in park development had manifested itself "only within a decade," and that in ten years the park acreage in each of these cities had been "more than doubled."

Parks for cities are a new demand, though one now so universally made that it seems as if parks had always had popular approval. Nor is it fair to sneer at the demand for them as if it were a convenient means of robbing the rich, on the ground that the "public-spirited voters of appropriations are not those who pay the taxes." The large parks have become the delight of the well-to-do quite as much as of the poor; and of the park acreage in American cities it is probably not too much to say that at least half has been land acquired by gift. For the rest, the initial demand is apt to come from the more enlightened, travelled, and prosperous members of the community. Like the whole movement for civic æsthetics the wish for large parks is a product of mature civilization.

If only the problem of bringing beauty to the city arose more often at the beginnings of a city, the question of park location would be simplified. The great obstacle of expense would lose almost all its effectiveness when land is cheap; and as for the park results, a consideration of the system in the first study of the ground plan would ensure the choosing of good sites. These would probably

include, as was observed in the first chapter, the dominating hill and a portion of the water-front. Aside from the general appropriateness of such location, long views are to be desired within park boundaries, from both the hygienic and æsthetic standpoint, and these views may be thus secured, or at least extended, without additional expense.

When the city is already built and the parks are only to be added, the relative value of sites, the character of the surroundings, and the need of ready accessibility complicate the ideal problem. If the city be also very populous, the high cost of ground will throw the park into the environs, and the difficulty will be presented of choosing a site that shall favor all sections impartially. It is the attempt to solve the problem when thus complicated that has given rise in American cities to the chain system of parks, by which large reservations are made at various points of the circumference equi-distant from the centre, and designed to be connected with it and with one another by park roads and boulevards. This system, of which Chicago and Boston are striking exemplars, has been now adopted in many of the smaller cities.

In Chicago the whole system is easily included in the far-reaching municipal limits. It comprises seven large parks, three on the lake-front, one to the south, and three to the west, and all connected by broad parkways or boulevards of which almost the last links have been constructed. The parks are all beautiful, and the encircling drive—now a boulevard lined with magnificent detached dwell-

ings, and now a parkway more than four hundred feet broad—will be, when complete, possibly the finest of its kind in the world. In Boston, a like result is secured by two commissions, the Metropolitan and the City. The former, which has main charge of the chain system, was created by legislation as lately as 1893. It was designed to bring Boston and all the surrounding cities and towns of the large metropolitan area into co-operation in the acquirement of one harmonious park system. Acting with constant foresight and public spirit, the commission has secured at an initial outlay of $10,000,000 substantially the land proposed in the general plan outlined in 1893, and by these purchases and by gifts it "controls more numerous large pleasure-grounds than are held by any public authority on the continent except the National and Canadian governments." From its elaborate report of 1900, it is not a little suggestive, as well as interesting, to learn that its seashore reservations aggregate about eight miles of ocean front; that the forest reservations, selected for their intrinsic worth, amount to seven thousand four hundred acres and are equitably distributed over the system; that, with the holdings of local boards, public control has been secured of the larger portion of all the river-banks within the district, the omissions being lands likely to be required for wharves or other purposes essential to the business convenience of the community; and finally that the parkways and boulevards are "a natural supplement to the reservations," determined upon after careful study,

and "with the threefold purpose to make the metropolitan reservations accessible, to unite these reservations and the more notable local parks into one system, and to provide pleasant driving communication between them and the various cities and towns of the district."

The close connection of such systems with urban beauty will at once be clear. Because of this intimate connection, the system does more for a city's appearance than could any single park however beautiful. Whatever the subtle influence of park beauty on the æsthetic aspirations of citizens, the casual sight-seer in Philadelphia or Brooklyn would find the city itself little altered for its famous park. He would think separately of park and town, perceiving no necessary coherence. Here the town, there the park; their sum would appear algebraic, not arithmetical. The same may be said of New York and Central Park, though something very like park system is beginning to appear in the upper end of the city, where, instead of superimposing an oasis of beauty, it is changing the aspect of much of the region. The improvement illustrates the value of the chain-park system with its linking park streets, from the view-point of city beauty. The system has, moreover, this further advantage — it broadens throughout the community the feeling of near and personal interest in the parks, widening thus their influence; and extends the area through which gifts of land for park purposes may be appropriately made. The value to a community of these park possibilities is illustrated by

the large gifts which they have recently rendered available in Hartford and Cleveland.

As charity covers a multitude of sins, philanthropy covers a multitude of motives. In nothing is this more clearly true than in gifts for parks; and yet it must be admitted that public spirit interested in the æsthetic development of a city can hardly find a more direct and obvious means of benefaction than in such gifts. The importance to St. Louis of Tower Grove Park and Shaw's Garden, the bestowal of an individual, well shows this; and the donor's enrichment of the former with two fine bronze statues, and his liberal endowment of a practical school of botany in the latter, are evidence—aside from his unique bequest in provision of two banquets to be held each year by those interested in this expression of the city's higher life—of the lengths to which the public spirit of a citizen may go, if once it be actively aroused in such direction. But the assertion that probably half of the city park investment of the United States has come in gifts from private persons is not wholly dependent upon benefactions so striking. The experience of Springfield, Mass., is pertinent, as typical of a frequent but little reported kind. The principal park comprises 463½ acres, made up of 24 parcels of land. Of this 19 parcels, containing 339½ acres, were the gifts of individuals. The park also contains considerable zoölogical and ornithological collections, for which not one dollar of public money has been expended for specimens. The report of the park commissioners of Scranton,

Penn., in 1898, included in its list of gifts a commodious kitchen for the use of picnickers, a lake, a menagerie, and a number of summer shelter tents; and the little city of York (Penn.), when setting about a rehabilitation of the old public common in the same year, found associations and individuals ready to present almost everything. A musical society gave the band pavilion, mechanics an iron flagstaff and flag. Each school in the city, private or public, planted a tree. Citizens gave benches and seats, and collectively a fountain, for which the water company furnished free water.

When so great an interest is shown by individuals, some associated effort is to be expected. Phases of local park management or development are constantly under discussion by art and civic clubs; public spirit usually insists that the maintenance of the parks shall be free from political interference; and even architectural societies find in the parks a subject for professional consideration. In Chicago, for instance, the Architectural Club has formally discussed "plans for beautifying parks and boulevards," and the subject for the designs in competition for a travelling scholarship in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1900 was the improvement of an entrance to Fairmount Park.

Philadelphia offers, moreover, a very interesting example, on a large scale, of voluntary associated effort in behalf of parks. This is the Fairmount Park Art Association, founded in 1871, incorporated in the following year, and with a paying membership which years ago passed the thousand mark.

It is a society composed of men, women, and children who contribute, by associate, annual, or life dues, to a fund from which to purchase works of art for the adornment of Fairmount Park. The claim is made that since its organization almost every Philadelphian of note has belonged to this association. A certain part of the dues is set aside for the permanent fund, which is to be allowed to accumulate until it amounts to $100,000, now nearly reached, when the interest will be used.[1] The unreserved balance is expended as opportunity offers. It would be interesting, and valuably suggestive, to follow in some detail the work of the society. Since, however, its annual reports can be readily obtained, a brief indication of its activity must here suffice. The twenty-fifth report (that of 1897) showed twenty-nine works of art already contributed to the park, and accepted, while several others were under commission. With three exceptions the work donated was sculpture, in bronze or stone, the exceptions being paintings which had been placed in Memorial Hall, in the park. Eight fountains were included in the list of sculpture, and of the twenty-nine works of art contributed to the park ten had been presented first to the association. This indicates its value in another rôle, as encouraging private gifts by providing an appreciative recipient. The association has an important function also in carrying out the terms of bequests with an assurance of fidelity to art ideals. When a citizen of Philadelphia recently bequeathed $500,000 for the construction of a Soldiers' and Sailors' Me-

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 300.

morial Gateway to the park, he did so with the stipulation that it be erected under the auspices of this society. Finally, other scope for its activity has been found in the arrangement of park fêtes, as at the unveiling of its memorial to General Garfield in 1896.

A society somewhat akin in aim to the Fairmount Park Art Association appears in the Boston Common Society, recently organized to add attractiveness to Boston Common, as champion of its cause offensively and defensively. The possibilities that lie before such an association are well indicated by the success of the Public Green Association which was active in New Haven a hundred years ago. This was probably the first of its kind in the United States, for the spirit of civic improvement was not then abroad. It raised money, or money's equivalent—one man subscribing five gallons of rum—for "grading the green and planting elms," and today the Elm City with its "green" has a unique reputation among American municipalities. There has been formed recently, also, a national society known as the American Park and Outdoor Art Association. Its membership is composed of experts, it holds annual conventions at which valuable papers are read, and defines its purpose as "to promote the conservation of natural scenery, the acquirement and improvement of land for public parks and reservations, and the advancement of all outdoor art having to do with the designing and fitting of grounds for public and private use and enjoyment."[1]

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 300.

In fact, as one surveys the whole range of park activity, it becomes clear that as far as the interest of the study goes American cities are in advance of those of Europe. For this there are several reasons. The youth of the movement here, its democratic impulse, the rapidity of the progress, the daring and novelty of the schemes proposed in the difficult problems offered by parkless cities, conspire to give to our achievements a dramatic interest. In old-world cities almost as much has been done; but through the greater age of the movement and the acquirement of large and convenient parks by the dedication of crown property to public use, the interest of the accomplishments is mainly historical. The chain system as understood in America is rarely found in them, though a fair substitute is obtained by the conversion of old fortifications into a girdle of park. This was done, for instance, with Nuremburg's encircling moat.

Conditions which are most like those in America appear in England. British cities have had large private gifts for park purposes, and while the best-known parks of London, as Hyde, Regent's, and St. James's, are property of the crown, still a deal of interesting effort appears there in voluntary societies. The great needs of London and the city's peculiar position in the matter of the origin of its parks make most of it novel. Not a little should be suggestive.

The villages and towns that form the outskirts of the metropolis have each a common, and as Greater London gathers them to itself it designs to

use these local commons as suburban parks. But they are far from the centre, often in thoughtless and sparsely settled neighborhoods, and to see that the opportunity is improved there has arisen the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society. It offers jealous watchfulness and provides specialists in the knowledge of those intricacies of English law through which the commons can so easily be lost to the metropolis. The society was founded in 1865, and though finding its greatest need in London it is national in scope. Since its establishment no common within the Metropolitan Police area has been enclosed; large areas that were previously appropriated have been restored to the public, and many of the most important open spaces have been put under suitable guardianship. To all of this the society has contributed by arousing and instructing public opinion, by interesting powerful bodies, by directing local action, and by exerting a needed influence in Parliament. Closely in line with this society, indeed owing its origin to it, is the Thames Preservation League. Organized in the summer of 1899, its membership is made up of representatives from the Thames-bank branches of the Commons society and from various London associations of kindred purpose. The object is the preservation of the Thames and its tributaries for public enjoyment, and then the maintenance of "all that tends to the beauty and interest of the river." The latter purpose is to involve "the consideration, with a view to the prevention of the disfigurement of the river, of all proposals for

bridges and other works "—a department of effort which shows that the league touches municipal art in the broadest way. There are other organizations in behalf of playgrounds, but London parks, owing to the nature of their foundation, make little further demand on private effort.

Of the treatment to be given to park lands, it is not necessary to speak here with detail. The modern tendency is to reserve formalism for small areas and those having some architectural environment, allowing the natural features of the large park to be mainly determinate of the style adopted. This is a good rule from the æsthetic side; but other considerations demand respect in the choice of treatment. A belief in the nerve-soothing power of pastoral scenes, the constant necessity of devoting much space to walks and roadways, the tendency to make the park a site for public sculpture, and to locate zoölogical and botanical gardens within its limits, are factors to be surely reckoned with, though they may modify some æsthetic claims. Happily, American cities do not lack illustrations of fine landscape treatment of park areas; and it is possible for botanical gardens to add much in interest without marring beauty.

In speaking of the chain system of parks, it has been impossible to avoid some reference to the handsome drives and parkways that are its connecting links. The practical dreamers of city beauty, however, have imagined a far more glorious development than a mere means to an end. They

have dreamed of park roads that should be an end in themselves and so a striking feature in the structural skeleton of the city beautiful. It is noteworthy that some of these dreams have come to realization. They point the way with encouraging confidence.

Roughly speaking, the roads that are glorified drives and nothing more—neither boulevards to be built upon nor primarily means of communication between two points — divide themselves into two classes: fast-roads and beauty-roads. Both cater to wealth, although of late the ubiquitous bicycle, and the provision for it, has given a touch of democracy to the latter. The fast-roads, or speedways, are still rare as a separate construction from the parks, for they must have a combination of conditions to justify them. The Harlem Speedway, New York, which was very elaborate in original plan and is doubtless the best known of such American drives, was begun in 1894, and "finished" in 1898. It skirts the river, with a handsome protecting coping. Boston has constructed one somewhat similar on a part of the Charles bank, and the two illustrate a detail of river-front treatment for handsome cities. It is claimed of the Harlem Speedway that it is the best in the world as an urban provision. There are no cross streets from end to end of the three miles, and the broad roadbed is kept in perfect condition. Brooklyn, also, has opened a speedway, and one is contemplated by Philadelphia.

Of beauty-drives, some conspicuous examples are

the Sheridan, at Chicago; the Riverside, in New York; the Ocean Parkway, at Brooklyn; and the Farnam and English drives, at New Haven. There are various others—Brooklyn itself having also the Shore and the Eastern parkways, which are rich in promise; but those first mentioned are popularly held to be the American standards of their kind. The Sheridan Drive it is proposed to extend, with the aid of the intervening towns, all the way from Chicago to Milwaukee — a distance of some eighty miles, following the lake shore. Reaching far beyond the confines of the cities, it yet forms one of their most important æsthetic assets. The Riverside Drive on the high bank of the North River affords rare views, and is all within New York. The Ocean Parkway, passing through no especially romantic scenery, gains distinction by its own dignity and its popularity. The New Haven drives, winding up the great rock, represent possibilities in a different sort of topography. In the other cases the beauty-drive is not only a drive. It includes bridle paths, roads for bicycles, and ways for pedestrians. Strictly urban in its character, it leads the city to the country's edge, as marble steps and balustraded terraces define the site of a palace.

The fast-drives, the beauty-drives, and the parks' connecting links do not comprise all the park-developed roadways. When pleasure areas are on the circumference of the town, they demand adequate connection with its centre. This must normally be by an existing street. The qualities

to be desired in it are directness, breadth, and freedom from heavy commercial traffic. If it has trees, if it is substantially built up, and if the erections upon it are detached in private grounds, or if there is an ornamental strip of verdure through the middle, it is not ill fitted for a park approach. As many as possible of these conditions having been secured on a street, it should then be put in the hands of the Park Commissioners for the regulation of traffic and to be developed as carefully as if it were park land. This plan, though recognized, has not been worked up in American cities as it ought to be. It would add dignity to the park, would bring the park to the people, and would beautify the city. There would be few places more suitable for ornamentation with sculpture than such a highway.

In Boston, Commonwealth Avenue, which is a direct approach, has been put in charge of the Park Commissioners; but they do little more than look out for the trees. In Philadelphia there has been discussion of such a boulevard, on a very elaborate scale. The proposal there was for a concourse 275 feet wide. It was to be entered from Broad Street by a triumphal arch, supported on each side by columns, and the central roadway was to run between broad lawns and flower beds, with more or less sculpture down its centre. Provision was included for bicyclists and pedestrians.[1] If it were possible for an American municipality to undertake such a public work on business principles, as a European city would do, reimbursing itself by

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 300.

the sale of abutting property at the advanced value which the improvement would create, the large outlay would cause less hesitation.

In New York the agitation for an ordinance restricting heavy traffic on Fifth Avenue, as the leading approach to Central Park, has called attention to the want of such a street. The proposal for restriction has had much opposition, especially in a republican prejudice against a seeming permission of class distinction, and this has nullified appeals to the not entirely relevant examples of civic splendor in thoroughfares like the Champs-Elysées in Paris and the Unter der Linden in Berlin. Some trouble in a Western city, however, with the use of costly pleasure-drives by funeral processions, and a suggestion that the driving pageant would give more pleasure to on-lookers from the sidewalk than to those who drive, should suggest that the restriction is not wholly born of class distinction. The Fifth Avenue agitation has been earnest and interesting.

It may be said, in closing, that in Paris the avenues and boulevards, for purposes of administration, are considered as belonging to the park system; and that the determination to make a great pleasure ground of the Bois de Boulogne was accompanied by a resolve to provide fitting approaches to it in the new boulevard system. Incidentally, it may be added that the city promptly recovered most of the money spent in the park's improvement by an advantageous sale of adjacent building sites. Yet in the creation and maintenance of large parks and

fine pleasure-drives American cities have, on the whole, little to learn abroad.

As one reviews the achievements in this direction, the thought obtrudes itself that from the standpoint of city beauty the danger to be most feared is that which would arise from satisfaction with the beauty of parks and drives themselves, without regard for their probable failure to blend with their surroundings—without fear for that contrast which would be revealed in the sharp line between a mean city and a lovely park. Beauty is not something that can be superimposed successfully from the outside—that can be added on. The park which has been bestowed upon the city as an after-thought may be a rich possession, but it remains a separate entity until it becomes an essential feature of the city's plan, grows into a seemingly natural part of its organism. You can't put a beautiful book beside one of poor workmanship and thereby improve the first, or even be able to speak of the two volumes as one fine work. Conjunction must become combination before a park or a drive changes a city.

It may even be that a park, while creating some æsthetic sentiment, will so absorb to itself the community's æsthetic desires and hopes as to rob the city of specific improvements it would otherwise have had. These dangers, largely arising because parks were not planned at the beginning, are very real; and while time will do something to lessen the peril, as the city grows around the park, yet

there is nothing to be more firmly urged than this — that the workers for city beauty should not rest content with the acquisition of a lovely park or a park system and beauty-drives until these are made an inseparable portion of the city's life.

And there is another danger in this possible absorption by the park of all the community's æsthetic desires and hopes. It is that the park will be overburdened with "ornamentation"—will be made formal and citified to the destruction of its possible restfulness and natural charm. It is because they have succumbed to this danger that so many parks have borne the brunt, and still bear the marks, of their community's worst epoch of artistic taste. To defend the park, therefore, from the mistaken zeal of town improvers is one of the most needful efforts.



CHAPTER X

"SQUARES" AND PLAYGROUNDS

FROM parks and drives to small playground areas and city "squares" there is as distinct a change as between the other products of urban æsthetic effort. The difference appears in purpose, treatment, and effect. Indeed, between the "squares" and playgrounds themselves there is little similarity save in extent, and the first could hardly have mention as a phase of "philanthropic" effort, for all their grateful effect upon the eye of the citybound, were they not to be classed as belonging to the park system. The small street-square is mainly æsthetic in its purpose, while in the playground we pass to effort of which the philanthropic design is clearly paramount.

The small squares, the circles, and triangles formed at the junction of city streets, and ornamented with vegetation, are destined to carry out the purpose of the parks and drives in adding to the amenities of city life. Properly considered, therefore, as belonging to the park system, they

are usually put in charge of its governing board. Indeed, in the ideal development of the beautiful city, all parks, "squares," and drives would have appeared on the original map, harmonizing with each other, and carrying with logical sequence the park idea into every portion of the city. And because these small ornamental areas are so identified with the street plan, they are, in fact, very frequently conceived at the start. The pleasant result is that sense of intimate and inseparable connection with the city's life which more ambitious parks too often lack.

Once located, the landscape treatment of the small space ought to present slight difficulty. And yet ideas on the subject are strangely ill defined. The primary conception, that in their narrower sphere they are to carry out the purpose of the park, has led to a hasty adoption in many cases of the "natural" treatment. Local attributes then cause modifications, and over and over the result is an incongruous mixture which defeats its end of art and beauty by being with completeness neither natural nor formal.

As the areas vary widely in extent and surroundings, it is difficult to lay down a rule that applies to all. But generally the small city "square"—using this specific term in its popular generic sense—offers an opportunity for formalism in its treating. For consider: 1. The limited extent makes concealment of artificial surroundings well nigh impossible. Walls of brick and stone peer over shrubs that are designed to hide the stream of traffic.

2. The outline of the plot is almost invariably geometric, lending itself most favorably to formal treatment. 3. To some extent at least the paths are highways; they tempt as short-cuts, and if they make winding detours their beauty loses effect by exasperating. 4. Very often, and it may be presumed increasingly, an architectural erection of public utility — a fountain, a lavatory, or a band stand — will be the keynote of the little area's development.

To these sufficient reasons, one more consideration may be added. Our premise shall be that a city square which has no practical use is sad, deserted, out-of-place. If it is designed to be beautiful, then, this purpose should be given the unmistakable emphasis that formalism grants. Originally the public square was a market. When the paved rectangle has been abandoned and the city desires to redeem the dreary waste of flagging, there are three uses to put it to. The space may be built upon, which is never to be recommended; it may be dedicated to the children and transformed into a playground; or, retaining the advantages which it offers to pedestrianism for short-cuts, it may be distinctly devoted to the cause of city beauty. If the latter course be chosen, there is no reason why a pretense of nature should be attempted. It is one of the few cases in which *rus in urbe* on city property may reasonably be given the artificial mould of formalism. The regular beds of flowers, bordering the walks; the stretches of greensward in the angles; the fountain, the piece of sculpture, has each its *raison d'être*. It is

designed to please the eye of busy, hurried men and women—not for idle hours or children's frolic —and is sincere and genuine.

One is tempted to turn aside here and quote from Canon Rawnsley's personal and loving account of Ruskin's "Hinksey Diggers."[1] Perhaps this would be worth while too, for Ruskin had a way of re-enforcing his æsthetic appeals with a moral argument. It will be recalled that a part of the diggers' work was to put to rights the three-cornered bit of green in Hinksey village. The master himself had gone to Italy, but he had left his instructions for "the young gentlemen" of Oxford who had agreed to handle picks and spades and barrows in the summer term. They knew just what they should do to make the green fair again. But Ruskin kept writing letters, for his heart was in the work. The filth in the back streets of Genoa only made him more determined, evidently, to see to it that the squalor of Hinksey should be removed, so that village life in decency should be possible. He urged men to endure hardness for the great idea. In a letter from Rome he tells how sure he is that if St. Paul should come on earth to-day he would approve all honest attempts to show forth faith by works. In a later letter he expresses a hope that his diggers may some of them band themselves together, one day, and go out in a kind of Benedictine brotherhood, to cultivate waste places, and make life tolerable in great cities for the children of the poor.

[1] The *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1900.

His wish has come nearer realization in the present playground movement than he could well have foreseen. But we shall speak of that further on, since the wish for city beauty has not depended wholly on the impulse of tenderness and pity. It has awakened a popular desire that something be done with these small areas to make them decorative even before, in some cases, it has definitely determined what treatment is the better fitted for them. Two phases especially of this demand may be noted with interest.

First, the attention of the women's clubs. It is well that their appreciation of the desirability of beauty as an element in civic development should reach small matters as well as large. Grand schemes for vast public improvements with parks, drives, and boulevards naturally stir enthusiasm and allure to effort; but these smaller plans for making a city attractive are also discussed and promoted. With the beginning of 1900, for instance, the Woman's Club of Brooklyn, the largest organization of its kind in the borough, resolved to begin its effort to beautify the city by trying to secure a lovelier treatment of the small parks and squares which had hitherto been sadly neglected. And almost simultaneously the Woman's Club of Chicago, which occupies a like distinguished local position, voted to spend from its own funds $1000 for the improvement of one such little area. The two examples are no more than types of a deal of feminine endeavor to be found in many cities. In Philadelphia, the City Branch of the strong Fair-

mount Park Art Association, which has a membership of men and children as well as women, was established in 1888 to do for "the city streets and parks" what the larger branch has done for Fairmount Park.

The other interesting phase of the demand is of narrower scope. This is a popular endorsement of the decision of railroad corporations that it pays to make station surroundings attractive. Of the position of the companies themselves, in improving so markedly the trail of the railroad through the city, there already has been mention. This other effort appears in the adornment of the public plaza which often is placed before the station. A few years ago the city of Genoa set about this task, surrounding the memorial to Columbus with flowers and shrubs and grass, "in order," as the Genovese authorities distinctly declared, "that the first impression of strangers coming to our city may be favorable." The undertaking was very widely commented upon in the newspapers of the United States, where a town's sensitiveness as to how it impresses strangers is often out of proportion to its regard for the effect on its own citizens, and the example's success gave new authority, strength, and courage to efforts to improve station-squares. Various instances might be cited. A good one is that of Providence, where to the new station there was added a municipal improvement of Exchange Place that wrought a transformation. Incident to the improvement was the gift of a memorial fountain, to be placed in the square, and a decision to

group around this prominent and pleasant site the public buildings. There can be no question that hereafter "first impressions" of Providence will be better than of old. Another American case may be noted as an interesting modification. A plan for establishing a certain little park was under discussion in Jersey City. The president of the board, declared a newspaper, "said it was useless to put the park there unless it could be seen, as the idea was to advertise the city by getting rid of the unsightly view as trains enter the city from the cut." The clerk replied that "the new park would afford a striking and picturesque view, and this view will be the first to meet the eyes of incoming passengers." That the city would seem to them the better for it, is obvious. This is a rather bold demand for municipal art; but in choosing the site of a decorative area, consideration of the stranger's impression might be kept in mind.

The subject of playgrounds is one that has come up lately with great vigor. It may be called one of modern philanthropy's favorites, and is one in which the women's clubs have taken a particular interest. There is no need to comment here on the perfect appropriateness of their course, or on the philanthropic side of the question—attractive as that would be. The point is that a great many playgrounds are now annually added to city possessions, and that a great deal of money is expended upon them.

In London the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association reported in 1898 that since its organiza-

tion, in 1882, it had laid out, wholly or in part, ninety-eight playgrounds and gardens, these having an area of 125 acres and costing upwards of £41,000. In the State Legislature of Massachusetts in 1900 a bill appeared to allow Boston to borrow at once the money for twenty playgrounds, and this after immense results from private efforts. In New York a bill was passed in 1887 authorizing the city to expend a million dollars every year for playgrounds in the congested part of the island, and as much as two hundred thousand dollars has been spent in merely adorning and equipping a single one. In Chicago a great deal has been done; Philadelphia was a pioneer in the movement, and it would now be not too much to say, perhaps, that there is no city in the United States which has a woman's club which does not have something to show as a children's playground.

Now the pertinence of this to civic art is the effect of the playgrounds on the city's appearance. The playground is a bit of land seized from the builder's clutch and set apart for the children, consecrated to their use to help them keep their souls pure though they soil their hands. It may or may not be beautiful. The small squares—set about the city like little girls dressed for company and told not to stir lest they muss their stiff white skirts—have for function in the city's topography to look well ordered and pleasant. They, practically, are sitting for photographs. But the playgrounds have a different purpose. While they contain possibilities for the adornment of the city, that part of

their advantage is secondary. It is only the æsthetic phase of a distinctly philanthropic effort.

As a result, some of the most famous playgrounds in the world are bare even of grass, gaining such beauty at they have from the grace of the trees and the happiness of the children. Such are the long earth stretches of Boston Common, of the Champs-Elysées, of the Garden of the Tuileries, and of the Prater at Vienna. But we shall do well to note that bareness belongs to the older playgrounds. Beauty is good for the child as well as for the city, and although here and there enthusiasm for out-door gymnasia is tempting to architectural dissipation, and is leaving all or some of the area bare of turf and flowers, yet this tendency is likely to be kept in reasonable bounds by its expense. The drift will be toward such natural adornment with vegetation as is possible without injury to the primary purpose of the ground.

Some considerations suggest themselves for the treatment of playgrounds. First, they must contain seats, so that watching nurses and mothers may be comfortable. These should be inconspicuously placed, with as little formalism as possible, and should be painted green to offer no harshly artificial contrast. Secondly, it is a rule, and a good rule, in Paris to provide these small parks with shallow pools of water where children are permitted to sail toy boats.[1] This pool may easily be made a pleasant feature in the landscape treatment, and to one who has seen the children gather

[1] The wading pond also has since come into vogue for the healthful joy which it may give.

year after year and day after day around the great fountains that are in Trafalgar Square in London, it has sometimes seemed that no like area of water in the world gives such pleasure as does this, so incidentally. Its success makes a strong plea for the playground's shallow pond. Third, it is held, notably in London, that no playground is complete without a drinking fountain; but when this is a separate construction it should be inconspicuous. And, finally, the playground's purpose—to give to city children a bit of country—suggests that the landscape treatment should be not formal, but natural. There will be many obstacles to success, as in the case of the little square; but the playground will have over the former the great advantages of a larger area and of the appropriateness of the purpose to this style. It would be interesting now to follow with some detail the particular achievements of the societies and clubs that have made playgrounds their special object. But we shall point out only a few that are suggestive.

In Philadelphia, the Culture Extension League has done much, including the equipment of what has been declared to be the most complete playground in the United States. The provision there of flagstaffs and flags is a detail with some bearing on city beauty. The transformation of League Island, for the treatment of which competitive designs were secured, is another striking evidence in Philadelphia of what this playground movement can do to improve a city's aspect. The thing is seen again in New York, where Mulberry Bend Park, for instance, occupies the old site of a

collection of filthy tenements. In Boston, the co-operative work of the women and the city on the Charles Bank is full of significance. In Chicago, as in several other cities, the movement for municipal playgrounds has resulted in the use and increased appreciation of school yards and the demand that henceforth all public schools shall have yards.[1] In Baltimore, the Children's Playground Association of the United Women of Maryland has the matter in charge, and very frequently the interest of many women's clubs is reflected in the playground committee of a local or State Federation.

The broadening æsthetic influence of interest in playgrounds is shown by its effect on the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association of London. This society, which has worked in accord with the County Council and is very strong, not only provides and equips open spaces, but places seats on public sites, plants trees in streets and gardens, improves existing playgrounds, and has erected numerous drinking fountains with special donations made to it for that purpose. Its report of 1898 noted, aside from the provision of playgrounds, its completion of three hundred other undertakings for London's betterment. Perhaps, indeed, it would be worth while to make some typical extracts from that one year's report, as showing what a society of this sort can do for preserving and increasing the amenities of a city. The association in those twelve months assisted in the preservation, acquisition, or improvement of fourteen open spaces; it planted trees on six others; it prevented

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 301.

building operations on one open space and on an unused burial ground; it successfully opposed three bills in Parliament; it set up seats in nine localities; it planted trees on seven public sites and by representations to the proper authority secured their planting in front of the Tate Gallery; it erected several drinking fountains; it adorned with shrubs and flowers an old burial ground which had not yet been opened to the public—as the interest in playgrounds now demands that the disused and neglected burial grounds of London shall be — but which happened to be overlooked by a hospital; and it conducted a competition for artistic designs for the fountains in the playgrounds. The society also, as an expert in landscape gardening, did some work for others, in the rôle of an employee; and the long record of its activity is not complete until it is said that the assistance which the society gave in the acquisition of open spaces included the collection of two hundred thousand dollars in a few summer weeks, so that an estate of thirty-six acres which was wanted as an addition to Hampstead Heath could be secured.

In New York a large number of philanthropic societies, such as the Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the Charity Organization Society, the Children's Aid Society, and the various Settlements, have pooled their playground interests in the establishment of the Outdoor Recreation League. An interesting result is achieved by the formation through this means of a committee which is very strong in resources and influence

The argument needs no elaboration that the playground interest may do much for city beauty, even though that result be only a phase of a distinctly philanthropic effort. For large returns, there is here required merely some æsthetic sense and enough interest in the city's aspect to insist that such regard shall put its refining touch on the work. The playground will thus bless children and city at once.

We have said that in many cities, and notably in Chicago, the interest in playgrounds has created a demand for school yards and a higher appreciation of them. There has come from this a movement which may be fairly distinguished from that for playgrounds, and which, whatever its other motives, makes clearly for civic adornment. This is the embellishment of the grounds of the public schools. The celebration of Arbor Day by schools now includes often the planting of trees in front of the building, and of trees and shrubs in the school yard. In Denver recently, under the impulse of the City Improvement Society, five hundred dollars was expended for schoolground trees on a single Arbor Day. But the movement goes further. In Rochester, for example—to take a city in which private gardens are still the rule—the Woman's Industrial and Educational Union, with the approval of the Park and School boards, has selected barren and uninteresting school yards, has planted them with seeds and shrubs, and has offered prizes for those best kept. Incidentally, care is taken to choose

plants which blossom in the spring and autumn when the children will most enjoy them, rather than those that flower in midsummer. The Massachusetts Horticultural Society has a committee on this work, and lately many organizations have taken it up. The advantage appears in the beautifying of the street, and of a bit of public property; but even more in its educational effect upon the children. If the art-for-schools movement, which decorates the inside of schoolrooms, is to be commended for its education of the child in the love and knowledge of beauty, surely the instruction afforded by beautiful school yards is not far behind. It will make directly for civic æsthetics in the future as well as in the present.

In the squares and children's playgrounds we find illustration of the fact that constant and tireless vigilance is the price of city dignity and beauty. The lesson has appeared more than once before; but this is a good time to enforce it, a good time to pause for the realization that as urban philanthropy may have, as it clearly does have, an æsthetic phase, so a beneficent deed does not realize its possibilities until it blesses from every standpoint. To put a playground around a school is well, or to put a playground where none was; but until there is serious thought of its appearance, in loving zeal for the city's aspect — until the playground has beauty, the good deed falls short of the perfection it ought to have. It is the glory of civic æsthetics that one can work for them in so many ways.

CHAPTER XI

ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT

IN the aspect of a city nothing is more striking than the buildings. They stamp and grave the town. Whatever the site, or the street plan, or the character of the way, the buildings are ever the dominating feature. They are background and foreground, they define the vista, and because the community is a collection of human beings, the dwellings in which these residents live and the houses which they build for their work or pleasure are the most obvious material expression of its life. When all is said, the city is mainly and popularly judged by its buildings. In them is history written; pressed down by the mason's hammer, hewn by the carpenter's chisel, and set in its proper relation to world and time by the plan of the architect.

Let us see how true this has been. In the Middle Ages the city clustered around the great cathedral. In front of the church was the market-place. So in the life of the people the Church was dominant. It was in the heart of city and citizens, overmastering with its mystery, and towering in vastness, age,

and power over life's other, trivial, concerns. In Classic Rome, the centre was the forum, and to-day Roman law is the vital legacy of the empire. Above the forum on one side rise still the ruins of the vast palace of the Cæsars; at another end, looms the curving wall of the Colosseum. In these three constructions, forum, palace, and gladiators' theatre, is fairly written the rise and fall of the people of Rome. High over Athens stood the Acropolis, with its lovely temples that were shrines of art as well as of piety, and they tell still of the glory of Greece. In Genoa, called "la Superba," in Florence and Venice, are rows of palaces of merchant princes, and the tower of Giotto, the great bronze doors of the Florentine baptistry across the way from it, the huge Duomo, and the cathedrals at Pisa and Siena, are records of the Italian Renaissance that grew out of commercial wealth. In Northern Europe the trace of the Flemish Renaissance is written yet in the town halls where the republican citizens did their business, and in the lofty belfries which were their watch towers and where their alarm bells hung. So, in each civilization, the spirit of the age has had architectural expression. Essential history has determined the cutting and placing of stones.

When we come to apply this conclusion to modern cities, the buildings gain a new dignity and importance. The relative prominence of vast commercial structures becomes significant, so that it is not far-fetched to see in the American sky-scraper a hint of a people's commercial daring and aspiration.

When huge manufactories dominate the scene, we need not see hands and faces to know of industrialism; and from the gaudiness or good taste of private dwellings we draw unhesitating inference.

In the records of the older cities, it was observable, however, that public buildings rather than private were the truest reflection of the people. This is because the public structures belong to all. City halls, courts, churches — these are the people's houses. No individual limitations hamper their construction. They have behind them the resources of the populace and their shortcomings are those of the community's average. If a city, then, is notable for handsome administrative buildings, or splendid edifices devoted to religion, arts, and letters, there is record of something more important than merely its æsthetic magnificence. And the conclusion works the other way. If a city has not a crown of imposing structures, it cannot, in a democratic age, gain towers and domes and spires that stir, until the popular mind has risen to the point where it dreams of them and wishes for them concretely and insistently.

So the problem of city adornment with beautiful buildings is not simply one of co-operation, and adherence to a few plain rules. The spirit of the time writes itself down resistlessly. The best we can do at any period is to encourage its highest expression and strive to guide wisely its energy. When a great impulse seizes the people and carries them forward, they will not be ignorant of it. When in Florence the Duomo, the palace of the

Signoria, and the great churches of Santa Croce and Santa Maria Novella leaped into being almost in the same year, that proud, impatient city thrilled with new spirit, and issued at the birth throes of the cathedral a self-conscious cry that has become famous in the story of city building.[1]

From the standpoint of urban æsthetics the thing, clearly, that most counts is the aspiration and will of the people. If civic pride arises and there is regard for the appearance of the city, appreciation that the individual should show a respect for the public in what he thrusts before it, and a thought that in the building of the people's houses nothing can be too good, then we may be sure that underlying these there are noble aspirations. These are essential history.

It is one of the most important and gratifying features of the new movement for beauty in the city that such requirements are now broadly made by public opinion. The decoration, external and internal, which is bestowed on private structures, is not wholly selfish nor wholly for the sake of advertisement. It is only the individual expression of a popular impulse, for to-day luxury of construction is not confined to governments and kings. Yet the stronger emphasis still appears in the public

[1] "The Florentine Republic, soaring ever above the thought of its rivals, desires that an edifice be constructed, so magnificent in height and beauty that it shall surpass any like construction produced at the time of their greatest power by Greece and Rome!"

buildings. We find public libraries built on notably artistic lines, though they would have held books as well had they been planned like cotton factories; occasional court rooms adorned, in response to popular opinion, with mural paintings as beautiful as any private work; and stained glass, good sculpture, and lovely mosaics in legislative halls. We need not fear, then, for the interpretation to be put on the costly mural paintings in some hotels, the fine mosaics in a theatre, or the good sculpture on many commercial structures. Indeed, just because there is a private demand for these things, the satisfaction of the public demand is made the better, for architecture is in art of catholic application. Whatever raises its estate and anywhere dignifies it causes a thrill through the whole wide range.

Architecture being an art, the good or beautiful in it is permanent. The present is thus brought into competition with the accumulations of the past and, as in every art, it seems as if the golden age had passed. Perhaps on that account we give the present less credit than it ought to have. It has had to wrestle with many new problems, singularly difficult from the artistic side; yet a hundred years' test will probably disclose that the last half of the nineteenth century left its quota of good buildings upon the world.[1]

[1] It is significant, from this standpoint, that in several recent voting contests among American architects to determine a list of the "ten most beautiful structures in the United States," from fifty to seventy-five per cent. of the number have in each case been buildings not yet ten years old. The

Consider the merely political difficulties with which public architecture in the United States has had to strive. Federal structures have been produced by wholesale in the office of the Supervising Architect at Washington, after conventional designs. State buildings have been planned by architects who owed their employment to legislative committees readily appreciative of ostentation and vulgarity. Municipal structures have been entrusted to architects who had a "pull," for it has been customary to encourage "local talent" even at the sacrifice of local beauty. It is little wonder that the architecture of public buildings in American cities has been criticised and ridiculed. If it has begun at last to attain, in some large measure, to dignity and splendor, emancipating itself from political trammels and solving difficult problems

vote is by no means conclusive, for the survey of the field, limited as that is, was doubtless incomplete; but it is a straw that is not to be ignored.

An incidental revelation of these competitions has also important bearing on the movement for municipal art in the United States. In one of the most important contests, in 1899, the result, secured by a compilation of two hundred lists mainly sent in by architects, revealed that of the five buildings judged the "most beautiful" in the United States, two were structures belonging to the national government; three, including one of the former, were libraries; and one was a church. All of these belong, in a sense, to the public. In the full list of ten there was only one structure that was private, and this received little more than a quarter of the vote. Individual luxury and taste did not appear to be outstripping the public.

of construction, it has made an advance that promises much for town and urban beauty.

Plans for the more important government buildings in the United States have been lately submitted to competition, an important forward step born of the conviction that nothing is too good for all the people—that the public should profit from the best talent to be had. In many States there has lately been advocacy, and in some the adoption, of a law licensing architects, which is a precautionary measure safeguarding the individual. In part, the higher ideal for public structures is, no doubt, due merely to the general advance in luxury. Something else of it is due to the influence of the expositions. The Centennial and World's Fair were wonderful artistic stimulants to the nation at large, and the smaller expositions have exerted a like influence through a narrower area. Architects are given a chance to make beauty, now of form and now of color, as important as utility. They justify the experiment. At once they have employment of this kind from individuals and corporations, and the lesson, driven home to the public, begins to bear fruit in commissions for public structures. Finally, something of the demand is due to civic spirit.

The time passed long since when four plain walls and a roof would suffice for a public building. Then came that forward step when gentle breeding and good taste revealed itself in the chaste and stately beauty of edifices that are still among the most beautiful in the United States. Next, with

the tide of immigration and the rapid advance in wealth, came the debauchment of the architectural ideal and the demoralization of popular taste which jumbled styles and overloaded walls with meaningless decoration. The wealth has not decreased; there is no inclination to economize; but large means are ceasing to dazzle. There has been leisure for study, travel, thought, and the few of cultured taste are beginning to guide and direct the wish for display. Compare the interior adornment of the Congressional Library at Washington with that of the Capitol, the adornment of the new Appellate Court in New York with that of older court-houses, the decoration of the Boston Public Library with anything of the same sort in earlier public buildings. That walls must be artistically treated, that sculpture and painting must be entrusted to artists, until the house beautiful rises as surely as the house strong and serviceable, has come to be demanded in important public structures. Announcements that the new Custom House and the Public Library in New York would be treated in this way were accepted as a matter of course.

Modern philanthropy, also, with its vast means and mighty ambition, is not without inspiration to town and urban architecture. This appears both in its demand for structures that are noble and imposing in outward appearance — as libraries, schools, and various charitable institutions—and in its more recent approval of the "cottage plan" of construction, by which institutions may be housed in

groups of cottages of artistic design placed amid park surroundings. Through the one plan the community gains added dignity and splendor; through the other, added beauty. In either case its architectural character receives from philanthropy an elevated impulse.

The reaction of all this on civic beauty is clear. Ideals for public and private construction advance together. Gradually, this new building makes over the city; but at once its aspect is changed, its dignity enhanced. Noble sites receive worthier crowning. A real, present change takes place; and because history reveals how truly popular sentiment is written in the buildings that a people raise, there is also promise.

Merely as a record of progress, the decoration which is given to old structures will be as striking as new work could be. If a public building whose bare interior walls satisfied the æsthetic desires of an earlier generation is now treated to harmonize with its more elaborate exterior, the advance is clearly defined. There is afforded an interesting record of the progress of regard for municipal art.

France, England, and the United States offer three suggestive types of effort in the interior decoration of earlier buildings with new mural paintings. Paris, which in the discussion of cities is the most convenient "France," gives as usual the illustration of official action. In the last thirty years nearly all the *mairies*, or city buildings, of the various *arrondissements* have been redecorated, if

not rebuilt or enlarged; and upon the Pantheon's interior walls, bare for so many years, much costly and lovely work has been done. There, in the very heart of the roar and confusion of crowded Paris, Puvis de Chavannes's symbolic figures dwell in peace and calm, offering dreams of the past and future more lasting and greater than the deeds of a day. For this the city paid from its budget.

In England, the effort is still in the hands of the people, as it is with us, and very interesting illustrations are afforded by recent events. The present Royal Exchange has stood in the centre of London for more than half a century, the panels in the walls of its court bare to the thousands who gazed upon them. These have been lately filled in, some by individuals, one by the corporation of London, one illustrating the great fire by an insurance company, and others by different guilds or ancient companies. An instance which is yet more striking is afforded by the new interior enrichment of St. Paul's Cathedral. Until a few years ago, two centuries after its completion, practically nothing had been done in this direction. Then a large fund was raised. When some of this decoration fell below the popular ideal, there burst forth such a storm of criticism as to cause a modification of the plans, though the designer was an influential Academician. To proof of popular interest the event added evidence of a popular art standard and of loyalty to it. Another type of effort is found in Birmingham, where the decoration of the Town Hall with mural paintings has been undertaken by the pupils in the Municipal

School of Art. The subjects are obtained from local history, and if the pictures lack something from the purely artistic side, they easily make it up in interest of origin and message. From the centre of the hall they are at least as decorative as a conventional design could have been—but even that has heretofore been wanting.[1] In London, to return to the metropolis, yet another effort is illustrated by the local branch of the Kyrle Society. This society's work is mainly philanthropic, but there is a decorative section of which the purpose is "to foster a knowledge and love of art by such means as may be available." In the Municipal Lodging House it has placed mural paintings illustrating the charms of country life; and on its twentieth anniversary, in 1896, it reported that 191 institutions had been more or less decorated through its efforts. So, by informal means and humble, art may be brought into the city and material conditions made generally fairer, if only there be in the people the spirit to do this thing. If they have that, they will find, after the limited new construction, much energy yet left to expend upon the old.

In the United States, the municipal art societies have found their most attractive field in this interior decoration of buildings. The New York society

[1] A nearly parallel case, which may have suggestion for American communities, is afforded by the Academy of Fine Arts at Antwerp. It has been the custom there, during the summer vacation, to send out the pupils to paint the interior of village churches in fresco, of course as a gift to the parish.

was founded in 1893 "to provide adequate sculptural and pictorial decorations for the public buildings and parks of the city," and its first work was the mural decoration of the Criminal Courts building. This was a new structure, but that circumstance is an unimportant detail since there had been no original provision for such adornment. The following year the Municipal Art Society of Cincinnati was organized with similar purpose, and soon it gave a commission for the adequate mural decoration of the vestibule to the City Hall. This building is notable as having been, it is said, the first in America to exemplify municipal art as it was understood in the Renaissance cities of Italy, the Common Council throwing open to competition the designs for the stained glass windows on the staircase. The rapid spread of such a spirit was soon evident, however. The Strong administration in New York, for instance, appropriated $10,000 for a ceiling decoration in the City Hall, the Municipal Art Society agreeing to increase the efficiency of the grant by conducting a competition for designs and offering prizes. Baltimore citizens formed a Municipal Art Society in 1899 and proved their sincerity in urging the interior adornment of the new Court-House by promising to give $5000 to the work if the city would appropriate $10,000. The examples well illustrate the popular and very proper interest in this obvious branch of civic art.

With the effort of these societies is to be classed the distinct "art-for-schools" movement, which has spread all over the United States. This

movement is not less vigorous in England, where indeed it originated. An Art for Schools Association was formed in London in 1880, with John Ruskin president and Matthew Arnold and Sir Frederick Leighton vice-presidents. In both countries the object is twofold: to decorate the schoolroom itself, bringing beauty to what is for so many hours each day the child's environment; and to educate the mind and cultivate the taste of children. The idea is that thus there will be trained a generation which knows and loves beauty, an art public which will make beauty law in home and street and city. In as far as the decoration of a public building is the object, the "art-for-schools" movement and most of the American municipal art societies are akin. The former makes, indeed, a further endeavor; but it is likely that the municipal art societies can also properly claim an educational function.

It is important to observe that architectural development along artistic lines is not confined to those communities which have societies especially organized to promote it. Perhaps more progress has been made in Boston than in any other American city without a distinctive municipal art society; but the progress is in various directions and usually some organization is discovered behind each effort. The thing which is mainly needed is public spirit. Extremely important also is the appearance of official interest in the artistic improvement of old buildings. In Massachusetts the Legislature has lately authorized the mural decoration of the State

House, and few and weighty were the bills introduced in the national Congress in 1900 that had a more generally approving comment in the press than those for a redecoration of the Capitol.

Through all these efforts experience has brought three notable facts into prominence. First, there is the discovery that the growth of luxury has raised, in the present movement for civic beauty, a new standard of splendor. Architect and mason have been joined by sculptor and artist in building the people's houses—a proof, by the way, of art's renewed nearness to life. Second, it is seen that the workers for municipal art have an important field for activity indoors as well as without. Third, experience reveals that interior decoration, conceived now to belong to artists, requires co-operation between the designers. It were even well if the whole of a room, or a continuous series of sculpture, were given to one man. Unhappily this has been sometimes forgotten in eagerness for variety. But this error has come through the fear of excluding some good thing. It has arisen through that generous spirit, that ambitious purpose, and larger wealth, which lies at the root of our modern progress; and which, with artistic curbing, may, and must, do much to make towns and cities splendid.

CHAPTER XII

ARCHITECTURAL OBLIGATIONS

TO build with taste when we build anew, and to adorn the plainer architectural bequests of the past until they conform to a higher and more luxurious standard, is to do much for civic art. There yet remain, however, architectural obligations. Splendid public structures and refined and costly private work give, of course, new glory to the visible city life; but we would not have our villages or cities merely new. There is a beauty of age hallowed by history, since art is undying. We must save what is good from the legacies of earlier days if we would secure the completest beauty and interest. Second, we must place attractively the new possessions. Third, we must not merely save but we must reveal what is good in the old. Fourth, we must see to it that civic art's transforming touch is carried into every portion of the community, is mindful of the lowly as well as of the high, of smaller construction as well as of greater. Though there be development, architecture will not rest merely

with that. It will discover innumerable opportunities and obligations that are not in the direct line of growth.

Municipal art, in recognizing and preserving examples of earlier architecture for the sake of their beauty, takes no account necessarily of either sentiment or history. This excludes a deal of effort; but if here a door, there a window, yonder a whole building or just a column be preserved because it is beautiful, the city's wealth in picturesqueness and interest is increased. Naturally, the field for such efforts is greater in the old world than in the new. Yet in the care with which the beautiful, but long since outgrown, City Hall is preserved in New York; and the storm of protests which prevented a threatened destruction in 1896 of the Bulfinch front of the State House in Boston, we have evidence of the effort here. In the latter case, it is worth remark — as showing how organizations appear behind art movements and strengthen them — that ringing resolutions were adopted by the Boston Society of Architects and that from even the Fine Arts Federation in New York there came a letter pleading for the preservation of the old front. The same co-operation appeared in regard to the alterations made in the executive mansion at Washington. In that case the appeal of the local Fine Arts Union, for the appointment of an expert commission to consider plans, was endorsed by more than twenty outside architectural clubs and societies, by the Fine Arts Federation of New

York, the Municipal Art Society of Baltimore, the Maryland Historical Society, etc.

There must needs be more done along this line, however, in ancient cities of Europe than in young America. The opportunity is greater, if not more important; and the effort in its behalf is better organized. This line between historic and æsthetic interest is a distinction finer than most preservation societies care to draw; but in the London Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings there is a voluntary association devoting itself wholly to the subject's æsthetic phase. The society preaches protection, not restoration. It was founded by William Morris, and takes as its creed the dictum, "Renewal of old work should never be resorted to unless repair is impossible. When unfortunately renewal is the only course, the new work should be carefully designed as far as may be to harmonize with the old; but not to be made in imitation of it, or of any existing work elsewhere." In its crusade against what it calls "architectural forgery" the society depends largely upon the educational influence of its leaflets and newspaper contributions. Its somewhat novel work is suggestive and important. It cites as proof of the justice of its contention the surpassing interest of an old edifice to which additions and alterations have been made in the unmistakable fashion of their own time: "A church of the eleventh century," it says, "might be added to or altered in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, or even seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but every change,

whatever history it destroyed, left history in the gap, and was alive with the spirit of the deeds done midst its fashioning. The result of all this was often a building in which the many changes, though harsh and visible enough, were, by their very contrast, interesting and instructive and could by no possibility mislead." The society is supported by the annual dues of its members. London has also, officially, a Committee for the Survey and Registration of the Old Memorials of Greater London. Its duty is indicated in the title.

In Paris there is both official and individual effort in this direction. In the opening of new thoroughfares and the advancement of the great public works, Parisians have had not merely to build anew, but to destroy before they could create, and to destroy with reverence and mercy. The city itself has lulled to sleep the Place des Vosges, which Henry IV. created; for on the proprietors of the surrounding buildings it has served a perpetual prohibition to change the shape or design of any structure. Much broader is the sweep of a national law, enacted in 1887. This requires the Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts to classify all the ancient or classical remains, buildings, or ruins, which it would be to the national interest to preserve. A historic monument once listed cannot be touched henceforth without the permission of the minister. Furthermore, the municipality and the national government have established a number of historical commissions, of which one, the *Commission du Vieux Paris*, organized by the

city at the close of 1897, devotes itself especially to the seeking out and preservation of artistic riches. It is charged also with the superintendence of any necessary changes. The large and honorable membership fittingly includes many members of the other commissions, several city councillors, members of the Academy, and officers of voluntary citizen bodies which have affiliated purposes. The commission apportions its work among sub-committees, one, for instance, having surveillance of excavations and demolitions, while another is charged with "the preservation in memory, by photography or other artistic means," of those parts of the city which are inevitably destined to rapid transformation. The reproductions are designed to go to the Carnavelet Museum, the city's historical repository. Once a month the full commission meets. Reports on the ancient stained glass in Paris churches, of various gifts to the commission, and of an examination by a sub-committee to learn what of artistic interest would be endangered by the prolongation of a certain street, give indication of the value and interest of its work. Various French cities, led by Lyons, have since appointed similar commissions, and the scheme would seem to be well adapted for the older towns of the United States

Belgium, for upwards of sixty years, has entrusted the protection of public buildings to the Royal Commission of Monuments. Local voluntary historical societies are the principal guardians of the structures that are privately owned ; but in Brussels the

city inspector of buildings is expected to make a careful examination of any area about to be reconstructed, reporting as to those parts that should be preserved. In Antwerp the law requires the sessions of the municipal council to be public when the destruction of public buildings or ancient monuments is discussed; and the owner of an old building can apply to the city for financial aid, if it is his wish to restore the façade to its primitive style. The latter clause is a particularly good enactment from the somewhat superficial standpoint merely of civic æsthetics, for it is a strong encouragement to effectively picturesque and typical façades, but one should compare it with the teachings of the London Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. When the work is "restoration" instead of repair, the law's result might be spectacular and scenic, rather than substantial. There is in Belgium, also, a national society for the protection of "sites and monuments." It has drawn up an elaborate code of instructions for the guidance of those who would repair old buildings. Careful adherence to its rules would possibly obviate some of the objections to the ordinance.

In general, it may be said that the greater experience of European cities, as compared with those of America, has led, first, to a conscious and earnest effort to preserve interesting specimens of earlier architecture, and to regard this as a municipal duty. Commissions similar to those of the French cities are to be found everywhere in Italy and often in Germany, and are perhaps the most

favored form of organization. When the city or nation does not attend to the matter, societies of individuals are formed for the purpose. Secondly, the distinction between restoration and repair is to be emphasized. Finally, it is clear that in the United States the local historical societies might, in fuller loyalty to their purpose, perform a great work for civic æsthetics by extending their guardianship to what is excellent or beautiful in local architecture.

A building's site is like a statue's pedestal. Therefore until buildings are well placed, their architecture does not exert its full power to add beauty to the city. It is not enough that a structure be good or that it sufficiently harmonize with its neighbors. It must be so situated as itself to be seen to advantage. In a mental picture of New York and Paris, which is found to have made the stronger impression, the Sub-Treasury in Wall Street, crowded between other buildings on a narrow thoroughfare; or the Madeleine (also Classic), with a broad avenue leading up to it? Press the Madeleine into Wall Street and put the little Sub-Treasury on a site like that of the Madeleine, or of the Pantheon, and the effect of the buildings will be almost completely changed. In a sense, then, a better site means a better building; and a good building nearly wastes its beauty when crowded between ugly structures on a narrow street, compared to the effect it might exert.

Having assumed the grouping of the public

edifices, three general rules may be laid down for placing notable structures in the city beautiful: (1) Those of Classical style are best when an extended view is possible. They should close a vista as do the Madeleine, the Pantheon, the Capitol at Washington. They may occupy a plaza. (2) The Gothic is easily dwarfed by surrounding space. The cathedral at Milan looks small in its broad square, its long lines shortened by the flat spaces; but Trinity Church, New York, lifts its aspiring lines impressively when seen through the cañon of Wall Street. Many of the best examples of European Gothic, ecclesiastic and civic, stand, indeed, in open squares; but they are not the better for that. The Gothic can be crowded if it so happen that there be radiating streets from which to see it. Finally, it is well to surround with small parks the structures that have historical interest. The advantages that accrue from such action include safety from fire, the granting to the beholder of the opportunity and leisure to study and reflect, and the provision of pleasant open spaces. Of course this will not always be possible, but like the two preceding rules it is a good one to keep in mind. Imagine its application to existing conditions around Faneuil Hall. If artistically necessary, a structure can be screened with trees.

In the new and more careful study of the science of city building, the requisites of site are treated with increased respect. We see this not only in those topographical changes which may be called Haussmannian, and of which there are so many

interesting examples; but in the clearing out of rookeries in many an old-world city for no reason more urgent than that a fine structure may thus be better seen. This brings us to the third architectural opportunity.

Examples are the demolitions that have disclosed Westminster Abbey to the passengers in Whitehall; and those which have lately revealed the architectural riches that are crowded into the centre of little Ghent, where a park has taken the place of intervening structures. In both these cases the expense has been met by the government; but in the latter instance at least the action was a direct result of municipal art agitation. If it be worth while to do this many years after construction, it were surely well in the case of very notable structures to plan for space at the start. The one action is the complement of the other. When the site of an important public structure is not thus conspicuous, in the sense that it does not naturally afford a long view, something ought to be done to make it so. Our record in this regard is mainly one of failures. An instance is afforded by the costly City Hall at Philadelphia. A site was given to it which would have been good for a statue or fountain, and when, thirty years later, the taxpayers had poured some $24,000,000 into the edifice and it approached completion, they suffered the mortification of seeing it almost screened from view by great office buildings erected on land that might have been cheaply cleared at the beginning.

There has lately appeared, however, an interest-

ing architectural development, which from this point of view is full of promise. This is the custom, to which the artistic success of the World's Fair gave impetus in America, of planning large construction *in toto*, although only a small portion may be at once secured in fact. The idea is to have a complete harmonious scheme, so that there may be nothing haphazard and conflicting in the successive steps. A prominent early example was afforded by the international competition for the general design for the University of California. The scheme, which is grandiose, embraced enough buildings to form a small town. The competitors were only instructed to make the utmost of all peculiarities of site and to see to it that relative values should be certainly preserved.[1] Other, Eastern, institutions, as Yale and Columbia universities, have, somewhat more modestly, adopted a like

[1] The conditions of this contest were so extraordinary as to deserve record. Mrs. Phœbe Hearst, the benefactress of the university, proposed to erect a mining building in memory of her husband. While considering the style of the building and looking for a site, the lack of any complete and harmonious plan for the institution was keenly realized and it was resolved to secure such designs by international competition in order that the institution's future growth might be toward a fixed and beautiful ideal. Mrs. Hearst offered $30,000 in prizes and paid all the expenses of the committee. The first jury met in Antwerp and the wide interest in the competition was shown by the number and high standing of the contestants. An international jury of architects examined the plans, and the final award, made at a meeting of the jury in San Francisco, gave the first prize, of $10,000, to M. Henri Jean Emile Benard, of France.

course in planning for extensions. It has been adopted also in the planning of new suburbs and even of industrial towns. If such designing be not above criticism, it yet has great advantage from the standpoint of civic æsthetics, for it determines the artistic placing of buildings, considered singly or in conjunction.

There yet remains a word to be said in regard to that humbler architecture which forms so large a part of city building, which sends no thrill of admiration through the observer, but which covers a wide area and is the concrete dream of "home" to many lowly citizens. It has been the custom for municipal art to avert its face from tenement districts, as if it had no call thither or had done enough in providing clean and well paved streets and frequent playgrounds. Even these it secures principally in the name of hygiene. But there is no part of the city where municipal art has higher call than to the tenement district; nor is there any in which it has at hand more elements to appropriate picturesqueness.

For consider the spectacular characteristics of the tenement population. Here, in still unassimilated form, is that cosmopolitanism which facility of travel has made so marked a feature of modern cities. It has been estimated that in Chicago less than one fifth of the population is native-born American. There are many more Germans, it is said, than in Munich, as many Irish as in Dublin, as many Scandinavians as in Christiania, more

Italians than in Florence, a hundred thousand each of Bohemians and Poles, and so through the long list of nations. The cosmopolitanism of Chicago is approached in all large cities, notably in New York, Philadelphia, Paris, and London. But what is there to show for it? Where there are present such powerful factors of scenic picturesqueness and variety, there is only dull monotony. Russians and Italians live in the same sort of houses, of a style that is foreign to both, starving their own natural yearnings and depriving the city of beauty. All national characteristics are crushed to one monotonous level of architectural utility, until a part of the city that might be most attractive and interesting becomes the dullest of all. The inevitable foreign "colonies" of big cities are not thus suppressed; they are robbed of picturesqueness, color, and beauty. There is no "little Italy," no Poland, no France; all the immigrants are playing a part and playing it ill, with their hearts over the sea.

In the wealthier portions of the city there may be imposing plazas, broad avenues, and noble sites crowned with worthy structures; public architecture may reach a high level of good taste and luxury, and domestic architecture may be fittingly expressive of the spirit of the time, revealing, under professional guidance, at once variety and harmony; but until the spirit of æsthetic renaissance descends into the slums and gives play to artistic impulse there, the conquest of beauty in the city will be still incomplete. It will have gained but

half a victory. It will have lost an opportunity. It may have missed the discovery, or the inspiration, of a genius.

The social and philanthropic effort that forms one of the great modern movements for improvement in urban life does not expend the whole of its public architectural energy upon tenements or [illegible] may buildings. Guided by the æsthetic impulse, it may do much in this way for city beauty, by demanding that in public structures, institutions, and tenements there be regard for a more attractive, as well as for a "better," city. But when it turns to those minor constructions on the public way, which it advocates for the people's happiness or comfort, it will be loyal to the same high principles.

If drinking fountains, for man or beast, band stands, or lavatories have the conspicuousness in site of a public statue, their artistic character should be scrutinized as rigidly. Utility should not excuse ugliness. With appreciation of this comes the discovery that there must be constant vigilance, and a conscious positive effort by those of artistic taste who are in authority. In the summer of 1899, for instance, thirty-three ice-water fountains were set up in the business streets of Boston in response to petitions. If these had been actually hideous, what an effect they would have had on the appearance of the city. Four centuries ago a little iron canopy was placed over the well in front of the cathedral at Antwerp, and people still visit it and marvel at its beauty.

In Paris these minor erections, put up by the municipality, are required, as we have seen in another chapter, to conform to an approved standard; while the lavatories, which are a concession, are required not only to be made of a certain material and size, but to present "in elevation a decorative appearance in harmony with their situation." In American cities which have municipal art commissions the power to veto a bad design is given to the commission. In cases where there are municipal art societies these sometimes conduct competitions for the designs of such public erections. L'Œuvre does this in Belgium, and in London the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association has conducted a competition for artistic designs for drinking fountains, holding such erections to be a necessity in its playgrounds. Its awards were made by Alma-Tadema. Architectural clubs on either side of the ocean have not considered the discussion of plans for street utilities as beneath their dignity; an interesting design has been prepared for concentrating many conveniences in a single structure; and it looks as though a new and professional interest in civic art would finally put a proper stamp on these erections.

In going over the important points at which architectural effort touches city beauty, it is clear that the æsthetic phase of such philanthropic activity as takes structural form can come to little, if its impulse be not natural and compelling. There must be twin motives: To make what is the world

of many citizens both fairer and better. Incidentally, neither purpose can approach complete fulfilment without the other's aid. But the fact brings us back to our first assertion, that architectural achievements, if they are worth anything of themselves, are to be valued for the spirit they reveal, that without a public and unselfish aspiration we cannot hope for much, since the spirit of the time surely reveals itself in what is built. To cultivate the popular taste, to educate the people and inspire them with an intelligent and enthusiastic desire for the architectural glory of their city, that is the long first step. Then will follow the careful placing of buildings, worthy new construction, the cherishing of the best of the past—all the points where architectural effort should touch city beauty. Walter Crane, asking what Florence would be without the noble group that is formed by the tower of the Signoria, Giotto's Tower, and the Duomo, has said: "When we think of Florence we think of this central group of buildings by which, through all changes, it maintains its wonderful character and beauty among the cities of the world." Each day while Giotto's Tower was rising, Dante used to bring a stool into the square and sit before it, that he might watch the perfect beauty of the growing pile and we should recall the command which the people of Florence gave to the constructors of their Duomo.

The burden of the obligation thus to instruct and inspire rests with the architects. Each large city has its club of them and this becomes, in a happy coupling of duty to the city with a strong

self-interest, the centre of such activity. Loyal to its artistic standard, the club will find one department of effort in fearless criticism. It finds another in exhibitions, discussions, and prize awards. When New York architects meet to discuss approaches to new bridges and the embellishment of the water-front, when Boston architects save the Bulfinch façade of the State House, Cleveland and Chicago architects arouse popular interest in the grouping of public buildings, the Milwaukee Architectural Club demands that a conspicuous new bridge should be made a civic ornament, and the Pittsburg club invites competitive plans for the architectural improvement of a designated portion of the city—when these city clubs combine in national organizations which urge town improvement and appoint a committee on that subject, it is plain that the opportunity is not overlooked and that architects are taking the prominent place they should in the movement for civic renaissance.

Other associations, however, can aid. Municipal art societies see to the interior decoration of public structures; in Albany the local Camera Club has devoted some attention to photographing buildings, single and in groups; in any city the local historical society can exert an influence to preserve the architectural legacies of the past; and in all new construction for associations, business houses, or individuals, employers can require architects to be loyal first to the ideal of city beauty. They will best serve themselves when building who best serve their city.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FUNCTION AND PLACING OF SCULPTURE

WE have said that the three great groups of altruistic effort, designed respectively to make men wiser, their surroundings better, their outlook fairer, merge into one another until each is an ally of the others. The closeness of the connection between philanthropic and æsthetic effort has been seen; there is connection not less obvious between the æsthetic and the educational.

Of course, in a general way, larger information, broader culture, familiarity with the best achievements of past and present in the building of beautiful cities and towns, tend to raise the individual ideal and so to create a popular demand that will be followed by improvement. But the alliance is more specific and direct than this. When the instruction is actually in art, in its history, its principles, its technique; or when the instruction is offered through objects of public art, as statues, there is no doubting the positive æsthetic influence of educational effort. Municipal art recognizes at once a powerful ally.

In taking up, therefore, that part of the movement which is traceable to the educational effort, we may consider, first, the function of sculpture in the beautiful city; and then the means and influence of art education.

That public sculpture necessarily is, in one way or another, educational, will not be, perhaps, entirely clear at once. But when to the long list of commemorative and memorial statues there is added a realization that ideas are embodied in all sculptured figures, it will be seen that the statues of a city are a record not only of its history but of its spirit, not only of its achievements, but of its ideals and aims. The lion of Venice, the wolf of Siena, the lily of Florence, were sculptured in many public places to remind the people at their daily tasks of the sovereign State and to keep warm their civic pride. In Venice, over the entrance to the palace of the Doges, two sculptured figures stand out so plainly that none who passes beneath the gate can fail to note them. One is the lion of St. Mark, the other is the Doge kneeling before it, in constantly pertinent reminder that the sovereign is servant, not master, of the State. Again, in Florence, when the people had risen against the Medici, had established a republic, and the French troops went away carrying all the treasures of art they could, two great statues were retained by the Florentines. These were, significantly, Donatello's *David*, which obviously taught a lesson; and his group of *Judith and Holofernes*. The people

placed the latter, as representing the spirit of resistance to tyranny, in the Loggia dei Lanzi, where all might see it, and on the base they carved these words, "Erected by the citizens as an example for the public good."

Our own statues of great men, the inscription of their noblest words and highest sentiments on the pedestals, and our memorials of great achievements are an unconscious effort in a like direction. When, upon the base of the great column to Nelson in Trafalgar Square, London, there is shown in relief the scene in which Nelson, wounded, declines to be assisted out of turn by the surgeon who is tending a common sailor, and on another side his dying command, "England expects every man to do his duty"; when, on the tomb of General Grant, in New York, the conspicuous words are "Let us have peace"; and the inscription on the Lincoln statue is the famous epitaph, "With malice toward none; with charity for all"; when, to the beauty of the Shaw Memorial, in Boston, there is added the phrase, "He leaves all things that he may serve the Republic," it is clear that something else than love of war and thirst of blood is taught even in sculpture that is of martial inspiration. Instruction in morals and civics is added to the lessons in history.

Then there is, to-day also, as in ancient times, the symbolical and ideal sculpture that has like purpose. The French especially excel in this. Such is the Column of July in Paris, with the figures of Justice, the Constitution, Strength, and

Freedom, "to the glory of the French citizens who armed themselves and fought in defense of the public liberty"; or the group in the Place de la Nation that represents the Triumph of the Republic; or the Statue of Liberty in the harbor of New York.

In all this, alike in ancient and modern times, there is both educational and æsthetic function. In times or places where the people are unlettered; or in a land where the urban population is quite largely made up of foreigners, such works, which he who runs may read, are an educational factor that is not to be despised. They make powerfully and clearly for the city that is beautiful not merely in appearance, but in that higher sense of one that demands the devotion, loyalty, and pride of its citizens. History's preservation is not, then, the only rôle of public sculpture. In the accumulating influence of the long reaches of time, it may be expected to make as well as to record history.

Yet the latter function is very important. Now and again city sculpture is made use of for the single purpose of providing a record of facts. But, beginning with the memorial tablets that, increasingly, mark historic sites, the historical sculpture rises gradually to greater assertiveness, dignity, and self-conscious artistic effort, until, at last, it blends inevitably and indistinguishably into that other, inspiring beholders with high ideals and making history by urging the emulation of deeds of self-sacrifice and patriotism.

The primary purpose of recording history ex-

presses itself in many ways. It appears in the portrait busts of heroes, in commemorative and ideal and symbolical statues, in preserving and marking historic scenes, in splendid erections over the graves of the great of the world, in the adornment of public buildings with sculptured records, in the construction of memorial entrances to parks, in street exedras, in such edifices as the Valhalla of Germany at Regensburg, or the Hall of Fame on the University Heights, New York—sculpture running here into architecture. Or it appears with the like intent in lowlier form, as in the recently completed commemorative cloister of "the Postmen's Park," in London, where the heroism of the obscure has record.

And then, again, there is some, but not very much, civic sculpture that has no conscious educational purpose. In pure love of beauty, this would give substance to an artist's fancy, and put dancing nymph or gentle form amid the city's uproar and confusion. Or, again, in mingling of æsthetic and educational motives, we find a great event so thrilling a people or a conqueror that magnificent construction alone can satisfy. Then rises, for instance, the Arc de Triomphe, in Paris; or the Washington Arch, in New York—at first a temporary structure, so beautiful that the people perpetuated it in marble, as some have subsequently wished to build the Naval Arch; or such erections as the great adornment proposed in Detroit for the river park, Belle Isle, in commemoration of the city's bicentenary.

The possible beautifying effect of all this on town or city demands no explanation or apology, for the function of public sculpture is one of splendor. It is not merely (1) to instruct, by embodying ideals and principles in allegory, symbolism, or historical scenes; not merely (2) to record history; not merely (3) to be decorative; nor (4) in notable mingling of these functions to rise to splendid achievements, differing in degree rather than in kind from the foregoing. It is all of these things together, is each magnificently; and if it be worthy of opportunity and subject, how it may enhance the city's dignity and beauty, emphasize its higher life, as with imperishable material it records in immortal beauty undying thoughts and deeds!

The condition suggests, therefore, the one great requisite to render public sculpture an aid to municipal art, once its high function be grasped. This is fidelity to a noble standard of criticism—not merely the existence of such a standard, but the authority to enforce its ruling, to demand that the means be worthy of the end. We have seen that very little public sculpture is purely decorative. "Art for art's sake" is not the motto of those who dress our streets with the sculptor's bronze or stone, and because their attention is so distracted by other purposes, educational or commemorative, we have sometimes sad violations of art and taste.

As clearly, it will not do to leave the matter to the public. If the attention of sculptors and donors be distracted by other considerations than

those of art, the people may not be depended upon to think with single purpose of beauty. With similarly scattered interest they welcome to their streets a "portrait statuary," hesitating at no bodily or tailoring peculiarities, and sparing no thought for fitness to surroundings, if only a name be thus commemorated, a bit of history recorded, or a lesson taught. And yet all this can be done artistically, enhancing the beauty of the street. But this public sculpture, because it has an educational function, ought to conform with the highest artistic standard of the community, not just with its average. If the people, with undivided attention, were true to their own art ideals in the judgment of sculpture—even yet the noblest results would not be gained were the matter left to them. And finally, what degree of unity and authority could the popular opinion have? Granted that in most cities the multiplication of public statues has reached a stage at which wholesome discrimination is necessary, would the people agree, offer it, and enforce their views?

Let us put ourselves at once above that provincialism which fancies that because a thing is sculpture it is art, and hence worthy of honor; or that because a thing is a gift it must be accepted. Let us picture the beautiful parks and streets which fidelity to preceding steps in town and city building could have secured for us, and, recognizing the high function of public sculpture, see how we can turn it to account. How may we make it really decorative, really inspiring?

We shall find prerequisites in the highest standards of criticism and the authority to enforce their ruling. If the people, the working sculptors, and the donors are not to be trusted, we must turn to some outside source. To have authority this must be official. It may be a part of the regular administration or an art commission.

Paris makes it the former. With the high average of her popular appreciation and judgment of art, with the jealous guardianship of her beauty by the people, and with her administrative system of calling to advise her the best minds and finest sensibilities among her citizens, she does this successfully. Ostensibly city officials pass on the works of sculpture which are offered to the city, decide on the purchases to be made from the annual grants for art, or on the orders to be given; but in reality the judgment of the officials rests on the verdict of the artists summoned in consultation. Her method differs little in fact from the American system. If she have not one art commission, it is not because she has not any but because she has several.

Cities in the United States have wisely feared, when waking conscientiously to artistic aspirations, to leave to their office-holders the determination of what is fittingly beautiful and artistic in public sculpture. Bitter experience has taught that the taste of politicians is even less to be trusted in this matter than is that of the public, of the sculptors, or of the donors. Thus the demand has arisen for art commissions. With the demand there has been recognition of their danger. Even yet initiative

power is rarely given them; and through fear that art, which of all things must be free, may be too much trammelled by the individual prepossessions of a small commission, it is required that the commissioners' judgment be based on what are acknowledged as art's universal principles. And the choice of members for the commission is not left to the caprice of an appointive power, which is nominally the mayor. That it may be politically free and artistically broad, a majority are made members by virtue of definite functions which they already exercise in the community.

Thus the Art Commission which was created by the charter of Greater New York consists of ten members. Of these, four are *ex-officio*, and three others must be, respectively, a painter, a sculptor, and an architect chosen by the Mayor from a list prepared by the Fine Arts Federation. The *ex-officio* members are the Mayor himself, the President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the President of the Public Library, and the President of the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. The three remaining members shall not belong to any profession of fine arts, but shall be selected from a list prepared by the Fine Arts Federation. In brief, the commission is safeguarded from political prostitution. At the same time, since no more than three of its ten members need be, and no more than four or five are ever likely to be, members of a profession of the fine arts, but shall be men of taste and culture, it is defended from artistic jealousy and bigotry. It is designed to represent the best

and broadest æsthetic sense of the community. In Boston, where the first commission of this sort was appointed, in Baltimore, Chicago, and other cities that have adopted them more recently, a similar care has been taken.

It is not to be supposed that art commissions pass only upon public sculpture. To quote from the charter of Greater New York "no work of art shall become the property of the city of New York by purchase, gift, or otherwise, unless such work of art, or design of the same, together with a statement of proposed location" be first "submitted to and approved by the commission"—nor can it, until after that, be erected or have place on any public property. Yet, since sculpture is still the most frequent form of public art in cities, it is that with which the commissions have had most to do.[1] They offer, then, that elevated standard of authoritative criticism which cities sorely want when determining the acceptance and location of such works. They dignify art in insisting that it shall be worthy of itself and of the town, keeping before the public mind and emphasizing the art ideal in the consideration of public sculpture's many-sided claims. And this is essential to city beauty, for not more money, but more art, is what is generally wanted.

There is one other way in which good results can be made probable, if not absolutely assured, in public sculpture. This is by competitions and the public-spirited co-operation of art societies in making them successful. In Washington, for

[1] Recent inclusion of architecture has transferred the emphasis.

instance, where there was no art commission in 1900, a monument was to be erected in honor of Samuel Hahnemann. Prizes were offered and sixty sculptors in America and Europe were invited to submit models, the National Sculpture Society giving its advice and assistance in making the award. This society had acted such a part many times before. It has an advisory committee which, "upon formal request of any National, State, or Municipal authority, or any committee on public monuments anywhere in the United States," will appoint a committee to "aid in choosing models for proposed monuments or to decide on the artistic merits of any proposed design or finished statue or monument." This makes expert critical judgment available where there is no art commission, and one of the reports of the society says that "the most important work which has fallen to it" has been in an advisory capacity. Its decisions are persuasive because of the confidence in their integrity and accuracy. In a smaller and somewhat more precarious way the like public-spirited criticism may be offered by local art societies, as it has been successfully by the Art Association in San Francisco, for example.

It is not enough that sculpture of worthy purpose be worthily executed. A good monument or statue is like a good building in that, to realize its full efficiency, it must have a fitting site. On the choice of its location depends its connection with city beauty. The street has power to make or mar

the statue; statues have power almost to make or mar the street, and they may enhance or ruin the beauty of a park. In spite of such possibilities for good or evil, popular ideas on the location of civic sculpture are singularly vague, and the concrete problems presented by definite cases have been strangely neglected.

There are a few simple principles. Speaking broadly, the place for the ideal is among the idyllic and reflection-inviting scenes of the park. Here, also, amid surroundings of park foliage, and not in the street, should be the sculptured wild animal. Yet in a park that makes pretense to natural treatment sculpture is to be used sparingly and with caution. It is well to consider, then, the advantages of public buildings, of bridges, of any important architectural structure, for purely decorative work. The rare colossal civic monument should have a commanding site, even though it be in the environs — as with the copy of Michael Angelo's *David* overlooking Florence. In the formalism of a city's little "squares" the ornamental fountain may be, as we have seen, an appropriate and prominent feature, and occasionally, where diagonal avenues touch, it may fill a narrow corner with advantage. On the plazas and bridges, in the broader spaces of the busy haunts of men, in conspicuous positions where they are not dwarfed by their surroundings but can dominate the view and be seen of many, should be the monuments of great citizens, of national heroes, the sculpture that shall thrill beholders with civic pride and high resolve.

Very rarely indeed should the street itself be trespassed upon, and then mainly in a pleasant and shaded spot where an exedra can reasonably invite to rest and thought. The group or statue of the "square" and plaza can dominate the street, can close its vista, can be of it and yet not upon it.

Simple and apparently self-suggestive as are these rules, practice has repeatedly ignored them. The Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square, the Hunt Memorial against the wall of Central Park, the Fontaine St. Michel in the angle of two streets, are international and familiar samples of well-placed sculpture. From the Columbus in the square which is the principal entrance of Genoa to the Policeman which keeps guard somewhat ungracefully in Haymarket Square, Chicago,[1] the instances might be multiplied of statues well placed for special as well as general reasons. But still there would remain a long catalogue of misplaced city sculpture.

In Philadelphia the problem presented to competitors for a travelling scholarship in architecture in 1900 was to design a worthy entrance to Fairmount Park at Green Street. Every one of the competitors found it necessary, when drawing plans, to shift the position of the Washington Monument. Here was a case, then, in which a statue had been placed with no thought of future changes and improvements, with no consideration of landscape treatment, at one of the principal approaches to the park. In New York the good

[1] Removed, since this was written, to one of the parks.

equestrian statue of Washington in Union Square is so dwarfed by its surroundings that its merit is lost on the casual passer. In this case the primary principle, the theory, of city statue placing was indeed respected; but there was not regard for modifying circumstances.

These may be important. There are few statues through all the rules which are not better for a background of verdure. Now and then, in a treeless plaza, against a background of gray buildings that are not too high or inharmonious, a bit of sculpture can be safely set to take its place as a detail in a steel engraving. But the effect will be cold and out of touch with the lives of men, and if there be any trees or grass it were wiser to place the statue where they can strengthen its outline better than do the walls, and give warmth to it. Another detail which should also be considered is whether the statue can bear to be placed against a brilliant sky that must throw all except the outline-modelling into shadow. It is that fact which often makes the proximity of a building, or a background of trees, advisable.

Violations of taste in placing public sculpture often arise, however, through a disregard of the first general principles. A conspicuous site is wanted, let us say,— to hide a true story with an air of fable,— for a large equestrian statue of a soldier. On the principal drive or walk of the park there is a certain prominent place and this is demanded, without a thought of lack of harmony with surroundings, without regard for the intrusion

upon lovely vistas and the screening of the perspective with bronze and granite. The statue does not belong there; it will not adorn, but will injure, the view; there is no recommendation for the site save that of prominence.

A time when red iron deer stood on dried-up lawns and tin swans swam in fountains is not so remote that many persons do not still believe that any effigy in stone or bronze must be a masterpiece benefiting the prospect of which it forms a part. Because of this, and of the selfishness of some who know better, few popular parks in large cities have not numerous statues that ought never to have gone to them. So serious is the evil in Central Park, New York, that in the spring of 1900 the Park Board adopted resolutions suggesting means to secure removal of some of the unfortunate sculpture now in place, and rules for guidance in the future. These may be reproduced as of interest and valuable suggestion:

No statue, bust, memorial, or memorial building, of any description shall be erected in the parks of the city of New York in any part of a park where the scenery is of a predominating natural character.

Statues shall be placed only as adjuncts to buildings, bridges, viaducts, or other structural work purely artificial in their nature, and in parks laid out in the architectural style, when required to heighten and beautify the effect of the scenery.

Statues of great artistic beauty only and appropriate in size may be placed in any of the small parks at the intersection of two or more avenues; such statues shall, however, be of great National, Civic, or universal interest in order to be accepted.

No existing natural scenery, no rock, woodland, lawn, or existing drive shall be destroyed or altered in order to accommodate any statuary or memorial, and such statuary or memorial shall be secondary in importance to the natural features which must prevail in a park.

No such statuary, building, or structure, even if in itself satisfactory as a work of art, shall be accepted unless it will help to heighten or offset the beauty of the landscape, and unless a satisfactory and appropriate site shall be found in conformity with previous rules.

Statuary and structures already in the parks, if not placed in conformity with the previous rules, may, if condemned by the Art Commission, be removed by the Commissioner of Parks.

The regulations, as a set of working rules, are not above criticism; but they serve as a formal enunciation of some of the principles here set forth and which had seemed too obvious to require the official endorsement of an order. The difficulty which the Park Board has had, after the adoption of the rules, in securing a removal of any accepted work, should be an appeal for foresight and discretion in choosing sites. If it be hard to be wise at first without giving offense, it is at least as hard to remedy an error once committed.

Perhaps the best course for town or city to adopt, though this is yet to be done, is the designation of the sites it cares to have adorned with sculpture, and then, when a project for a statue or monument arises, the allotment of a site to that purpose before the design is drawn. The sculptor would make his model conform with the location,

knowing his background and sky-line, and the fitness thus secured would be no slight consideration. There would be the advantage also that an allotment of sites to ideas, instead of to finished work, would give offense less often to donor or to artist than the present method of wrangling over fitness and harmony when the work is finished.

Incidentally, a designation of sites available for public sculpture would admit of a systematic development and treatment of historic themes. So much of the sculpture of the town is historical that the greater portion would be affected. The most complete development of this idea is illustrated by a plan that was once worked out for New York. It has been proposed that the city's history be divided into periods, and the city's area into corresponding sections. Then the sculpture that relates, for instance, to the Dutch occupation would be confined to that section in the lower part of the city which would have its artistic focus in the Bowling Green and Battery. So, with the city's advance in years and area, new sections are devoted with historical accuracy to the sculpture of new periods, as to that relating to the English occupation, to the revolutionary war, or to the civil war. By the cooperation of the local historical society and the local art societies, especially the municipal art, a very interesting and systematic scheme of commemorative sculpture could be secured. But there are a good many objections to the plan, and it is mentioned here mainly that these may be pointed out.

In a large city, where the daily ebb and flow of population did not make citizens familiar with all sections, the tendency would be to emphasize upon individuals the history of one or two periods only, making their civic pride narrow and incomplete. Further, in the accurate apportionment of areas to events, the crowning achievement might have to be recorded in a very lowly corner of the city where there would be no site adequate to its importance, while to the memory of a citizen or a fact of only mediocre or neighborhood interest the best site in the town might have to be given. A sense of the high possibilities of municipal art could not look with favor on such a plan. An artistic objection arises also in the thought that such attempts to make a systematic record of the city's history would almost inevitably lead to an impatience to fill up all the gaps. And art dreads haste.

The proposal has, however, the virtue that it emphasizes the wisdom, when artistically practicable, of allotting sites with a regard for pertinence to the theme. But the connection should be not merely one of time and place. It should be one of relative values. As is the site among available positions, so should be the event there recorded among the happenings of the town. The artistic organization or commission which designates sites might well call on the local historical society for advice; but the power of the latter should be only to recommend. In the placing of public sculpture there are too many and too glaring artistic considerations at stake to have these sacrificed.

In summing up the discussion of sculpture's relation to city beauty it is felt that much has been left unsaid. In the larger aspects of the subject there was a temptation to overlook details, and in the press of the essential details aggregate effects are forgotten. Yet through the whole contemplation this thought stands out clearly: Public sculpture is abundantly worth while. It has magnificent opportunities, in the moral, political, æsthetic, and educational spheres. When of high purpose, worthy performance, and fitting location, what may it not do for city beauty? Public-spirited citizens may well find in it, as they do, an attractive field for enterprise. It has long been a favorite form of civic benefaction.

Indeed, at the stage of development at which most cities are to-day, the adornment of the town with public sculpture must be attained through the enthusiasm of citizens voluntarily engaging in the task. In the first step the donors will be individuals, and many a small town owes its one bit of public sculpture—a memorial fountain, a statue, or a commemorative monument—to the generosity of a single resident. The next step will be in the banding of many citizens together, temporarily or permanently, for this purpose. Of this origin are such recent notable examples in the United States as the great Washington Monument, which was presented to Philadelphia by the Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania; the Shaw Memorial at Boston; the Washington Arch, New York; the bicentenary monument proposed for Detroit; the

sculpture with which the Park and City Branches of the Fairmount Park Art Association is enriching Philadelphia; and the fountains on Market Street in San Francisco, where the opportune angles offered by a diagonal thoroughfare have awakened interest in the subject. Finally, will come the time when cities themselves will authorize the erection of public sculpture for their adornment.

Already Paris does this. When she wished to throw a new bridge across the Seine in memory of the visit of the Czar and to accommodate the Exposition traffic, she gave to leading sculptors commissions for its decoration. And always, by the freedom from political harassment of her art commissions, their permanency, and the elevation of their artistic ideals, she profits by a continuous art policy which is productive of large results, in the long run, from comparatively small yearly outlays. Even in the United States, a law was enacted in New York State in 1898 permitting all cities of more than fifty thousand inhabitants to spend a certain sum annually ($50,000 by the cities that have a population of two hundred and fifty thousand or more, and half that sum by the others) for American works of art, which are bought "for the purpose of beautifying" the city. These need not be, but may be, sculpture; and the act requires that the expenditure be made only on the advice of an art commission.

Properly considered, sculpture is one of the last and highest expressions of municipal art. We have said that Paris ordered it for a bridge. In so

doing she provided a fitting and noble public site, and followed good precedent—as the Karl Bridge, at Prague; the Friedrichbrücke and Kurfürstenbrücke, at Berlin; and some of her own constructions. Could New York, indeed, find a more striking pedestal for a statue that should dominate a wide expanse than the central pier of the Washington Bridge across the Harlem?[1] And the placing of a statue on a bridge is fairly typical of sculpture's true position in civic art. The statue comes last, and only after a bridge has been built that is strong and graceful, and fitted to be the site of a creation that is confessedly and preëminently a work of art — that is a self-negation unless it be one. Let us hope and believe that this is understood, and that in the United States so inspiring an opportunity for sculptors will never again pass as ill made use of as did the burst of patriotic sentiment that followed the close of the civil war. Then, in innumerable towns and cities, cast-zinc soldiers, made by wholesale, were mounted, at parade rest, on various pedestals, in disused and neglected commons or on dirty streets. There they degraded public art by maligning high and pure emotions. We shall learn to honor more worthily in the future, when we have learned to be more exacting.

[1] The opportunity was recognized by one of the competing engineers in his design.



CHAPTER XIV

POPULAR EDUCATION IN ART

IT has been said that a city's educational activities do have, and must have, an æsthetic influence. Municipal art, which owes much to the philanthropic impulse of the community, owes no less to its thirst for knowledge. Head guides heart in æsthetics as in other things, and the will to make beautiful is supplemented and rendered efficacious by the discovery of how to make beautiful—due to a more or less direct education in art.

In regard to city development, however, we must go back a little farther. It is by no mere chance that beauty is the last and highest product of civic progress. For note the course of city history: The town arises as a point of human energy. It is a market or trade centre where commodities are produced, distributed, or suffer a break in their transportation. Occasionally it may have been, indeed, a military, religious, or political Mecca; but in that case too it gathered men to itself because it was a centre of energy. The primary consideration at a town's beginning is, then, facility in the

performance of the work which the community has to do. For that end many comforts are relinquished, many opportunities for pleasure are abandoned. People are content to huddle together, to forego the delights of abundant air and sunshine, to sacrifice natural beauty, to dedicate a lovely water-front to trade, a commanding site to a hideous railroad terminal, or to suffer whatever other specific form of self and communal abnegation the cause of efficiency seems to require. It is not until a measure of success is revealed in the appearance of a relatively wealthy and leisure class that the amenities of life demand attention. Then larger and better houses are constructed; pleasanter grounds and streets are laid out; and the community, considered as a whole, takes forward steps. There are provisions for education, for philanthropy, for enjoyment. Asylums and hospitals are followed by parks and baths; schools by libraries and art galleries. At last the better towns boast that the culture of the citizens is become as much a matter of concern as is the cleaning of the streets, while regard for the public health—moral, political, and physical — is as strong as respect for the community's industrial activity.

It is at this juncture that the movement to bring beauty into the city becomes mighty, resistless, revealing itself in many channels. It has gathered strength through long, logical, and laborious development. It has asserted itself in the elementary construction; it has been schooled in the drudgery of merely negative action, in suppression

and repression; it has found opportunity to make philanthropic endeavors serve its own high purposes; it has dared to undertake sheer art work, and it rises at last to endorse and to urge popular education in art.

Municipal art's demand for this is endorsed by other considerations. The economic advantage of bringing art into industry, so that by the latter's perfection the best markets may be held; and the very goodness of knowledge itself, of the capacity for broad and refined appreciation — these are strong concurrent arguments for the provision of opportunities for art education. But the final test to keep in mind is the municipality's conception of its duty. When, to the provision of public safety, of primary education, and of facility for business, the town adds to the catalogue of its self-admitted duties the provision of comfort in living and then of instruction in the principles of beauty, we may be sure that it has advanced far in appreciation of æsthetics. It aspires to loveliness, and has taken the surest road to obtain the civic beauty and dignity it seeks.

For it is essential to success in a crusade for urban beauty, where the people are the real sovereigns, that they be also the art connoisseurs, the art patrons, the art lovers. That is the secret of the success of Paris among modern cities. Patricians might, indeed, make Venice fair enough to be the Adriatic's bride; and Lorenzo de' Medici might gain the sobriquet of "the Magnificent" for the riches which he lavished upon Florence. Nero

could fiddle while Rome burned, dreaming perhaps of the golden house and imperial city that were to rise. Pericles could meet accusations of squandering the public money with the confident appeal, "Make Athens beautiful, for beauty is now the victorious power in the world." Great emperors, tyrants, powerful families, have found a sure glory for themselves in adding to the splendor of a town, in finding it brick and leaving it marble. But when the people have purpose and power of their own; when there is no tyrant who, if he will, can do all for them; when at least they hold the purse-strings, the town must look to them alone for its beauty and art. That this is better need not here be said.

So it happens that while distinctive instruction in art by the city, as a portion of its proper function and its duty to all citizens, is a late and proud achievement of civic æsthetics, yet any instruction in the principles and technique of beauty counts. Private or public, of individual or associated foundation, education in art, whatever its origin, makes for a beautiful city. It enlists new champions in the cause. It provides the fine sense and expert judgment that should guide the ignorant, crude, and unformed taste of the many, and it clothes that judgment with the authority which pertains to the respected. By showing what might be, it creates a demand for what may be, and it teaches how to secure it. The town which has begun to long for higher things is taught to long for them intelligently and to make them practicable.

The instruction may be of various kinds. We see much of it in private clubs, especially in professional and women's clubs, whose members band themselves together for the study of art, in its principles, its history, or its evidences through all the world. The instruction may receive an impetus from the universities and colleges; it may be popularized by lectures; it may have a place in the public school system; it may be imparted directly in schools of art, and by the influence of galleries; or private societies may show themselves public-spirited by bringing the subject of civic art before the people. The propaganda of the village improvement societies is thus educational. The Reform Club of New York and the League for Social Service, with beauty in the city only one goal of effort, have collected large libraries on city problems, putting them at the service of the public, and have collected photographs and lantern slides. As another instance, the art committee of the Twentieth Century Club of Boston, to set an untrained public to thinking, formulated a few years ago a series of questions, offering cash prizes for the best answers by juvenile competitors. Samples of these questions, since put, appropriately modified, with suggestive advantage in other cities, are as follows:

1. What things are most necessary to make a beautiful city life? Mention those which Boston possesses and those which she lacks.

2. (a) Name a well-known street that has a good sky-line, and one that has a bad one.

(b) What objections are there to the usual

methods of placing signs and posters on our streets? What improvements can you suggest in the treatment of them?

3. Name some of the most beautiful and some of the ugliest objects in South Boston, the North End, West End, South End, Back Bay, and Roxbury.

8. What great opportunities has Boston lost to make the city beautiful?

Premising a practical value, then, in all the educational efforts, it is no part of our task to detail the instruction afforded by private institutions, and the bearing of this on civic art. When a university, imparting general culture, has schools of art and of architecture, offers travelling scholarships in these subjects, and inaugurates competitions for plans of urban improvements, the connection is unmistakable. Clearly, if the city, as a city, should do this, it would further dignify the position of art in the popular estimate of education's natural divisions.

But the modern university of America, with the wide reach of its elective studies and the broad scope of its general purpose, does not stop even at so much aid to the knowledge of how to make cities beautiful. A number of universities have established regular courses in landscape architecture and several have more lately opened city-planning courses. The influence of such instruction, carried into innumerable communities, will do much to show the difference between art and its lack—even though all the graduates do not set out professionally to practice. The first travelling scholarship for archi-

tecture to be established in the United States is said to have been as recent as 1883. There is now a long list of them, and public-spirited men have lately established in Rome an American School of Architecture. There have lately been endowed, also, in the universities, as a result of the wide-spread interest in the government and progress of cities, several lectureships or chairs of municipal affairs. A type, for instance, is that which is the ultimate purpose of the fund that was raised as a memorial to Colonel Waring. Its subject, at Columbia University, could not properly be "civic art," architecture, or even landscape gardening; but we have seen how important a part in the problem of city beauty is that played by the ordinary engineering problems. The street cleaning, moreover, is a *sine qua non.*

Apart from the aid of the universities, the educational phase of municipal art in America owes much to lectures. These are most likely to have behind them a society or club that is working for city betterment—as in Denver, where the City Improvement Society has arranged courses of public lectures on the subject; or as in Massachusetts, where the State Federation of Women's Clubs, establishing a lecture bureau, at once prepared a talk that was entitled "Town Improvement, or Beautiful Surroundings." This has been in constant and enthusiastic demand. Educational institutions, organizing popular lecture courses, also frequently include this subject.

These lectures on civic æsthetics can be easily

illustrated, can be adapted to any degree of intelligence, and have the merit of setting audiences to thinking. The most familiar type of them is one, for example, that was entitled "A More Beautiful Boston," delivered under the auspices of the art committee of the Twentieth Century Club of that city. It applied to local conditions the general principles of civic art, and so enforced them and made them seem practical. It may be worth while, however, to speak of two others which illustrate the different directions in which these lectures may develop. One was delivered in a great hall in Detroit. It was popular in every sense of that misused word. A large audience listened and was interested, because the delivery was itself a result of a stirring of the people's heart with enthusiasm for the bi-centenary civic-memorial project. The people came to be told of the sort of thing they were wishing to do. The other was delivered by a young woman before the members of an evening club of street waifs. She had no pictures, save those which her own words drew; but she caught and held their attention by basing her remarks on their knowledge and love of the town and their pride in it. They were street boys and she interpreted and revealed the possibilities of their stamping ground. In the schools, where the children's attention can be held to the subject by repeated talks, the volunteer leagues of juvenile workers have appeared.

Speaking generally, instruction in municipal art

—stretching the three terms, instruction, municipal, and art, to their limit — is mainly left in American cities to private initiative. Art is treated by the cities altogether too much as if it were a luxury. In the public school system it hardly makes more than a tentative appearance, with the occasional elementary instruction in drawing.[1] The recent interest in bringing art into the schoolrooms may, however, as we have seen, accomplish something else. It is significant from this view-point that the Municipal Art Society of Baltimore has an active committee on school decoration, the society attaching importance to the subtle influence of an art environment and to familiarity with the examples of art's application to cities. In the departments of higher education the cities, as such, rarely do more than afford occasional scholarships in an art school.

But once leaving the field of direct education, they are more active. The larger cities have notable public galleries, and though these are not specifically municipal, yet most of them owe considerable to the city. The Metropolitan Museum of Art at New York, for instance, was the outgrowth of a public meeting and is indebted for its collections to the public spirit of individuals. But it stands on park land and owes its site and building to the city, in consideration of an agreement to admit the public free on four days of the week, and on holidays, and to give special privileges to public school teachers and pupils. Similarly in Boston the Museum of Fine Arts owes its site to the city, and only about one fourteenth of its visitors pay

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 301.

an admission fee. In Philadelphia the city provided the funds for a gallery that promises in time to be very notable. In Chicago the Art Institute has had nearly six hundred thousand visitors in a year and a registration of about twelve hundred students. That something in the way of art advantages is due to its citizens by the progressive city, for its own good name and credit, has come therefore to be recognized. It is interesting to note, too, in this connection, occasional efforts by voluntary associations of citizens to make existing collections more efficient in an educational way. For instance, in Philadelphia the Civic Club annually conducts in the Academy of Fine Arts a series of evening receptions, for which tickets are distributed through societies, guilds, manufactories, etc. A committee is present to explain the pictures and to receive the votes of the visitors as to the one liked best.

European cities go further officially than the American. The art schools of the city of Paris, and that city's eager appreciation and encouragement of talent, are well known. The lessons that will be found most helpfully suggestive to America are those afforded by the great new manufacturing centres of England, as Birmingham and Manchester, for municipal schools of art are found in nearly all large English cities.

It is unnecessary to trace here the curious rise of the desire for public instruction in art in these industrial towns, and the accidents that favored the growth of their schools. Suffice it to say that the

need of bringing art into manufactures, if England would maintain her manufacturing supremacy, was a primary cause. The Municipal Schools of Art at Birmingham were the first in the United Kingdom. There are about eleven hundred students in the splendid central building, and perhaps four thousand at the branches, and this of course makes no count of the pupils who receive elementary instruction in drawing at the board schools, although that also is under the supervision of the School of Art. The high standard of the school has been proved frequently in the prizes it has secured in national competitions. The direct effect of its far-reaching instruction, upon the local problems of civic art, which must be sufficiently obvious in a general way, has been further revealed by special acts. The Art School building has itself been adorned with stained glass, decorative brasswork, and so on, by the pupils; and they have decorated with pertinent historical or symbolical paintings the long mural panels of the Town Hall — as if in witness of a feeling of obligation on the students' part to beautify the city which has taught them to know and love beauty. To describe the great school at Manchester would be to describe Birmingham's again, and in proportion to their size the smaller cities do as much for definite art education as do the larger.

But these schools, interesting as they are, form only the active side of the constant art educational effort of English cities. The fine municipal galleries may be said, by contrast, to form the passive.

These not only reach a class of citizens whom the schools, with their particular appeal to the young, could not reach; but they offer a constant art ideal that keeps the goal of all the effort high and pure, that cultivates almost unconsciously the public taste. They put the city's stamp of practical value on what to so many of its citizens might seem the "merely" beautiful and dreamy; and from their rich collections they frequently loan pictures for the adornment of the public buildings.

Although maintained from the rates, these municipal art galleries owe, like the art schools, much of their excellence, and often their very origin, to private generosity. Thus, with loyalty to high standards of art, they may develop special characteristics. The gallery in vast, black, manufacturing Birmingham, for instance, is notable for examples of pre-Raphaelite art. In nearly all the galleries the educational work of the permanent collection is, however, enhanced by special loan exhibitions. These also do much to maintain the institution's popularity. At Birmingham the first was devoted to pictures by Burne-Jones and George Frederick Watts, and drew over four hundred thousand visitors in three months. The next was devoted to pictures by Henshaw, the next to a collection of English art from the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition. It attracted nearly three hundred thousand visitors in three months. In the following year there was an exhibition from private galleries of family portraits and old masters. Another time English animal painters and at yet

another time modern French painters were the subjects. In the loan exhibitions of the corporation of London, that of 1899 happened to be devoted to Turner. Surrounded as it was by national collections, and relatively academic as was its subject, it was visited by three hundred persons an hour for the three months it was open. An exhibition of French paintings was followed by a dinner given by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House "in honor of art," and then by a ball at the Guild Hall.

With a careful but enthusiastic administration of these galleries there is a conscientious effort also to develop their educational functions. In the corporation galleries at Glasgow important lectures have been given by request of the governors of the School of Art. In Manchester, the curator has found lectures less successful in reaching and helping the art-ignorant than is a personal mingling with such visitors and informal talk. In Birmingham a good deal of faith is placed in cheap catalogues which have very heavy sales. For a penny these often give not only the names of the pictures, but something about the artist and his work.

In Liverpool, Worcester, Leicester, and many other places the municipal galleries are spreading an important art influence, which is not yet greater everywhere in visible results only because the galleries are so new. Never are they allowed to get far from the popular touch, lest the people might come to think of city-art as something aloof and apart. The attendance at the Birmingham

gallery, open free every day, including Sunday, ranges from five hundred thousand to seven hundred thousand in a year; and each visitor, on entering through the registering turnstile, sees on the wall before him a bulletin giving to date the statistics of attendance. In a column on the left are printed the days of the week, in the next column is recorded the attendance for each of these days, and then a statement of the weather conditions. Underneath is written the total for the preceding week, and below that are the very impressive figures which show the total attendance since the opening of the gallery. Thus there is no citizen so lowly that he may not feel a personal interest and pride in these statistics of the people's appreciation.

That all this activity makes indirectly for municipal art in its general sense will be not less clear than that it is, of itself, municipal art in a narrower and special way. The details of management of galleries and schools need hardly be gone into here. Differing conditions of city government would require different conditions of administration for the town's institutions. It is enough that in the development of municipal art ideals this phase or expression of the aspiration appears. It means that the town, which at first had no thought save that of adaptability at any cost to its business, and which attained but slowly to a desire for the comfort and culture of its citizens, may finally — with all its industrial activity continuing—come to consider the education of its people in the knowledge

and love of beauty to be one of its duties, and to desire art objects for its own possession because it cherishes art for art's sake. In that there is a very striking advance.

One suggestion obtrudes itself in considering the progress. This is the appropriateness of a city's emphasizing municipal art in its advocacy of æsthetics. Should not that, indeed, be the main object in a city's collection of beautiful things and of its instruction in art? What more fitting than that the municipality should frankly look at art from its own standpoint, should teach its citizens to love and wish for civic beauty; and in its collection of casts, paintings, or industrial fabrics, should care most for those that suggest ways for its own adornment, that are examples which may inspire its citizens to take a like action for their common good? And is not this the fairer course? The public moneys should be spent for *public* art.

This can be done as easily as it can properly. In the pictures that decorate the walls of schoolrooms, some emphasis is given inevitably to civic art. It might well be increased. In the popular lectures town æsthetics should certainly have a place; and in the lessons in the art schools, good models for architectural or sculptural work, or for copyists or for painters from nature, ought readily to be found in the home city. If it be necessary to go outside to secure them, this fact should be impressed on the pupils. That the general tendency would be to increase civic pride, there can be

scant doubt; but the point to be made here is that such a course would shortly lead to the city's own enrichment. And the enrichment would be that which is the noblest that any city can have: that bestowed by the love and talent of its own citizens.

This, then, marks the climax of municipal art endeavors. It is the better attainment because it is not only an end, but by its rich promise is a beginning. The city that has advanced so far in the conception of its duty, and that sees in the crowding together of many persons not a richer opportunity for business only, but for progress in culture and in art which ought officially to be furthered, that city has advanced to the utmost. If it now be true to high ideals it will develop a civic art that will write its name in history. Individual generosity cannot provide this instruction quite as fittingly as can the city, for of private beneficence the fine and general arts are the more proper subject. But until the city does exercise its high prerogative, this opportunity to act in its behalf must be tempting to public spirit. What higher call is there than to teach men to love city beauty and to show them how to secure it?

CHAPTER XV

WORK OF INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETIES

A STUDY of the rise and progress of the new movement for beauty in cities and towns makes note of two elements. On the one hand is the advance in mechanics and invention, making possible an improved construction of streets and favoring suburban development. On the other, is the human activity, the earnest effort of men and women who have wakened to the possibilities and obligations of city building. We have grouped the latter for convenience under the three dominating motives of philanthropic, educational, and æsthetic impulse. It might have been grouped, from another standpoint, in two divisions: as public and popular, as official and individual. Since the official endeavors for city improvement can be traced to the authority bestowed by popular approval, the latter is the main source of energy. Unofficial endeavors, as the nearest to the original impulse, may, then, be first considered.

It is important to note that in so far as the goal is civic art the significance of a general interest in

the subject has always been that the public has a consciousness of the nearness to life of art, especially of municipal art. This is revealed (1) in its admission of the feeling of its own obligation to art; (2) in the artists' revelation of their sense of duty to the community. Both sides show themselves aware of the connection in innumerable private acts, but it becomes clearer in the associated effort. The latter thus groups itself readily into that of laymen and that of artists.

The lay societies further divide themselves into the neighborhood or local associations, and the town or general associations, all having for purpose the fulfilment in their own particular direction of the public's duty to art. To recapitulate, then, all effort for city beauty is official or unofficial. The latter may be conveniently considered as by artists or laymen, and the laymen societies are general or local. In either of these cases it is impossible to do more than suggest their range by giving types.

The Association for the Protection of Fifth Avenue, New York, was organized to keep street car tracks from that thoroughfare. Its purposes extended gradually and it has taken part in many discussions as champion of the beauty of the street. Across the East River there was subsequently organized the Brooklyn Hill Improvement League. Its purpose is to promote the interests of three neighboring wards by adding to their æsthetic attractions. The district was once described, even with some pride by its residents, as "a brown-

stone wilderness." A newspaper, commenting on the league, has said: "It proposes to look after such eminently practical things as securing good pavements and clean streets, the planting of trees, and slowly to lead up to such radical departures as will overcome what one of the speakers described as 'the dreadful monotony in Brooklyn, a lack of artistic effect in our homes.'" Two things about this purpose are notable and significant. One is the recognition that the foundations of city beauty lie in lowly and severely practical things; the other is that mere solidity and costliness do not involve beauty. In a suburb of Chicago, Oak Park, there was formed a neighborhood society that affords an interesting contrast, for the thing its members had to dread was not too much monotony, but too little uniformity, on any street. As suburban residences, the houses represented the individual tastes of their owners. The society could approve of this, so far as the taste was good and the contrasts not too glaring, and placed its emphasis on community of action in public, or semi-public, work, such as the planting of trees on a street, the improvement of a square, or the choice of a site for a public building. The West End Improvement Association, in Rochester, has exerted itself to secure better street car service, better lighting, better care of the trees. It strives to keep the municipality and corporations to their duty.

The cases named are good types, because they represent converging but different lines. Their number is legion, every city having some. The

last example suggests their danger. It is the development of local rather than public spirit. A Cleveland newspaper, recently naming a half-dozen local improvement societies of the city, said that there were a full half-dozen more and complained that each was clamorous for the artistic development of its own district. Whatever may have happened in that case, one needs little knowledge of the present condition of American city politics to perceive what might happen. Jealousy might lead to the blocking of all improvement, or it might result in a series of "deals" which would involve the city in much more than it ought to undertake. A local association is likely also to be often lacking in the precise district where improvement is most needed, and amid the bickerings of the organized champions of other districts that locality, though it be prominent and need much, may be neglected. The local associations are good, they are evidence of an encouraging spirit, and provide a channel for neighborhood enthusiasm and vigilance that may do much for city beauty; but they have those dangers.

The existence, and the greater influence, of town or general associations suggest a remedy. The third annual report of the City Improvement Society of Denver (1899) said that since that society's organization five similar ones in the town had been formed. "The first was the Logan Avenue Improvement Association, followed by the North, South, and West Side Societies [and] the promising Twentieth Avenue Association." If the

mother organization could maintain a maternal control over these, condemning or approving local demands from the standpoint of the city at large, there would be little to fear from neighborhood societies. They would furnish the vigilance to discover every little local need, and then the general society would sift these and determine what ought to be done for the greatest benefit to all. Happily, in the interest for town improvement, the progressive American city is almost as sure to-day to have a general association as it is to have local societies, and usually this is well fitted to take the larger point of view and to emphasize it with a larger authority. It will be worth while to examine a few, for they also work on lines which, though finally converging, start far apart.

In July, 1899, in response to the suggestion of a city official, delegates from five or six district or neighborhood improvement clubs in Oakland, Cal., met and organized a central club, which they called the Associated Improvement Association. The club was non-political in character, and had as object to secure "for the citizens of Oakland a larger and more beautiful city, with improved streets, sewers, and parks." A significant result of the formation of this central body was that new district associations were organized in sections that had not previously possessed them. This was owing to the wish of residents of those sections to profit from the advocacy of general improvements by the central association.

The City of Hamilton (Canada) Improvement

Society is an organization of citizens of which the Mayor is president. Its object is to make of Hamilton a healthful and beautiful city. In its announcement the society states that it does not desire to supersede any of the municipal departments, but rather to aid and encourage the committees by calling attention to matters which had been overlooked or neglected. It issues a booklet containing the city ordinances, and appeals to citizens young and old to obey these and so, by leaving undone many specified things, to add much to the attractiveness of Hamilton. Members pay an annual fee of one dollar. Of like friendly co-operation with the city administration, is the better-known Cockburn Association, of Edinburgh. The latter has done much to make the city attractive. Aggressively high-minded and critical as, by its works, it has shown itself to be, its relations with the city officials are entirely cordial. It expressly disclaims essential antagonism; the Lord Provost of the city was long its own president; and, in an official's words, the Cockburn Association "strives to form a link between the civic rulers and outside public opinion." In its fearlessness, however, it has done much more. Its annual fee is only two shillings and sixpence, for the power of these societies is not financial but sentimental, is derived from the public opinion of them, from the esteem in which they are held.[1] A slightly different type

[1] Very pertinently it may be here remarked that the Cockburn Association, as its name suggests, was a result of one man's public spirit and enthusiasm for the beauty of his town.

of general organization, co-operating with the city administration, is afforded by the City Improvement Society of New York. With a comparatively small subscribing membership, this society has not developed beyond the point where it offers a medium whereby residents who have complaints to make, regarding various nuisances and the non-enforcement of ordinances, can bring these to the proper authorities in an influential way. More than two thousand have been forwarded to city departments and officials in a single year and have been generally attended to. As they relate largely to the removal of roadway and sidewalk obstructions and to unnecessary noises, the society is true to its published objects, which are: "To promote the improvement and beautifying of the city, and to assist and stimulate the authorities in enforcing the laws relating to such objects." The Municipal Improvement Association of New Orleans was organized in

Lord Cockburn's *Memorial and Journal* appeared posthumously in 1874, and the people found in it so much of wide interest and appeal regarding steps taken to improve or protect the picturesqueness of Edinburgh and its environs that a demand arose for a society that should make the furthering of such work its duty, as he had done. The Lord Provost was prayed to call a public meeting, and appended to the requisition addressed to him for the purpose were extracts from the book. Lord Moncreiff, in presiding, referred to Cockburn as "the very embodiment of what a patriotic citizen of Edinburgh ought to be." He said that what the city needed was "a watchful eye kept by a kind of collective Argus, such as this society would present."—*Vide* article by the author in *Municipal Affairs*, December, 1899, on "The Work of the Cockburn Association."

1897 "for the purpose of making New Orleans a pleasanter, cheaper, and more healthful place to live in." In its earlier years it mainly devoted itself to an effort to secure municipal ownership of public works, premising that such a step would "improve and beautify" the city, as well as make it more healthful and reduce the cost of living.

Aside from these societies, representative types of those which seek to co-operate with the administration, or to enlarge its power, there are many that take a less friendly attitude.

The Civic Federation of Chicago, dividing its activity into several departments, works for the one end along various parallel lines. The political department strives to secure cleaner politics and better public officers; while it was in the municipal department that it cleaned the streets of the downtown business district for six summer months, supplementing widely gathered figures in proof that the city paid more than necessary for such work. The Citizens' Association has been equally critical and fearless; and the *Manual* which it issues, showing, in chronological order, the principal achievements of the association since its commencement in 1874, is very impressive. The paving of streets, the suppression of the smoke nuisance and of unnecessary noises, are some of its many objects of investigation that make for a better city. Aiming yet more directly for this purpose in Chicago is the Municipal Art League.

Philadelphia, in the Art Federation, organized in 1900, offered a good example of another type.

Broader than its name implied, it sought to bring not only art societies, but all the institutions, organizations, and departments of the city government that are concerned in the embellishment and improvement of the town, into co-ordination. The federation was formed by delegates from these various agencies, and the Mayor in addressing them showed an enthusiasm and interest that gave basis to his promise of cordial official sympathy. This society, therefore, was not in antagonism to the administration, and bore to the smaller societies which compose it that maternal relation that may do so much for civic art. Of the unusual work of Philadelphia's Fairmount Park Art Association, which is one of its members, we have already spoken. So, also, of various municipal art societies. In Cleveland a Municipal Art League was formed to foster popular interest in the plan to group the public buildings. In Toronto a federation of artists, architects, and art lovers was formed in 1897 under the title of the Guild of Civic Art. Its purpose was to stimulate and protect the efforts for municipal beauty. Under its supervision the decoration of a part of the new City Hall has been going on, a private individual paying the expenses.[1]

There is a temptation to continue through a long list of such organizations; but we shall name only one more. This shall be in Brooklyn, since we named a local association there. It is the Woman's Club. Interest in the subject of municipal art is common to the women's clubs of so many towns and cities that at the biennial gatherings of the

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 301.

General Federation some sessions are devoted to this subject. Since these gatherings are attended by delegates, their discussion of any subject creates for it a sort of national convention. From this fact town improvement in the United States is beginning to profit not a little. But the friends of town and city beauty are not women alone; and in the fall of 1900, at a gathering in Springfield, O., of representatives of village and city improvement societies, an association was formed under the title of the American League for Civic Improvement. Its object was defined in its constitution as "to bring into communication for acquaintance and mutual helpfulness all organizations interested in the promotion of outdoor art, public beauty, town, village, and neighborhood improvement." Societies and individuals were made eligible for membership, and it was proposed to "further the work for public beauty" by organizing local societies throughout the United States and by holding national conventions.[1]

In reviewing the work of the various associations, a few thoughts suggest themselves. The distinctive spheres of the local and general laical societies have been pointed out. Each supplements the other. The general association may do a good work not only in transforming neighborhood spirit into public spirit, and in providing against the struggle of some sections of the city to gain benefits over other sections; but it may also, with its wider membership, prevent an unscrupulous perversion of these local societies' influence for the profit of

[1] *Vd.* note to page 162 on pg. 300.

favored contractors. It becomes, further,—like its prototype, the village improvement society,—a nucleus for the public sentiment existing, and this secondary purpose is not less important than the eagerness to accomplish definite things. For it then has a general position, and municipal art being a public question, the more democratic the interest in it, the better. A traveller, describing Berlin some years ago, spoke of it as a modern city, whose aspect had "no marked character and next to no originality." Such a city has no charm. There is a grievous lack in whatever beauty it possesses, for beauty is not a result to be gained by rule. When municipal art is the expression of the people, this danger vanishes. The charm that a city then possesses not only gives pleasure; it is of rich ethnological, social, and historical value. These popular societies have a high rôle and an inspiring opportunity.

It has been said that the artist's sense of obligation to the public is one of the results of a general interest in civic art and that its significance—full of importance to art as well as to city—is his realization that even in the hurrying, strenuous life of the day he is not to be a person apart from the world, but is one with a duty to the community. If his task were simply to supply beautiful objects of his own handiwork, he might live apart; but as a factor in the city's very life, what more obvious duty has he than the artistic direction and guidance of its efforts? This he must do, in the main, through

association. The public are many, the artists are few. To have power the latter must combine.

This is no new belief. The guilds of long ago might be fairly considered as art societies. With what magnificent statues did her guilds enrich Florence! A façade of a single church has a statue from each of the twelve guilds, among them Donatello's *St. George of the Armorers*. And all through Europe what has not civic art owed to the cathedral builders?

Coming home and to modern times, one's thought turns to municipal art societies, the Municipal Art League of Cleveland and the Art Federation of Philadelphia as fair examples of the associated effort of artists. These organizations, however, are largely composed of citizens who, though they may love art, have not adopted it as a profession. Civic pride and public spirit are the main requisites to membership in them, while now we have to do with the efforts for town and city beauty by practical workers in some division of the fine arts. The interest of the local societies of artists is the first and simplest example.

Plainly, the architects have an exceptional opportunity. And this involves exceptional obligations. It has been treated pretty fully in another place. They have the advantage of being able to devote professional knowledge to the interests of municipal art without departing from their natural field—an advantage not shared by some other clubs of artists, which therefore find popular opinion less docile. The architect, far more easily than

other artists, can offer to the man engaged in another vocation a new and tangible civic ideal. He can lead the citizen of to-day to compare his city, not with that of ten years ago, to wonder at its progress and be satisfied; but with the city that might be, and may be if the citizens will, ten, twenty, or thirty years hence. So in the popular mind he can make aspiration, desire, endeavor, take the place of satisfaction, with the result that the city will march surely toward an æsthetic ideal. To do this is, of course, the goal of all the art societies that work for city beauty; but the architectural have the best chance. Especially is this true among local societies, though all may do something in congresses, exhibitions, and the conduct of competitions. That has been clear all through.

Where, however, a merely local society may fail, through suspicion of its disinterestedness, doubt of its exceptional knowledge, or denial of its authority, a national society, demanding more respect, may succeed. Accordingly, earnest workers have formed national associations representative of the various divisions of art, and each glad to do its share for beauty in cities and towns. The national societies of architects are a good type. One of them, the American Institute of Architects, has petitioned Congress to appoint an expert commission which shall draw up a comprehensive plan for the improvement and development, topographical and architectural, of the city of Washington.[1] The other, the Architectural League of America,

[1] *Vd.* note, pg. 301.

early appointed from its own number a national committee on municipal improvement and civic embellishment. The committee was composed of architects, sculptors, mural painters, and writers on these subjects, residents of various cities from New York to New Orleans. Its purpose was to act in an advisory capacity, when so requested by municipalities or corporations, and to do so without charge.

A near approach to this action is, in a different field, the work of the National Sculpture Society. It also, as we have seen, has an advisory committee. But the sculptors, like the architects, in local meetings or in national conventions, do not always wait to be invited to advise — often as that invitation comes. They take the initiative in many a discussion on how a city might be beautified.

Our mural painters also have formed a national society. Their art is still young in America, but it is strong. By the decoration of public buildings it has made New York, Boston, and Washington notably richer in civic art. Indeed, a prominent sculptor, in addressing a convention of architects, figured as follows, to show the value of artistic decoration: "The cost of the Congressional Library building," said he, "was $6,032,000. Only about $400,000 was expended on the artistic decoration, which is seven per cent. Am I not safe in saying that ninety per cent. of the interest for the public is centred in those decorations which cost only seven per cent. of the total?" It is significant that mural painting could have so soon a national organization behind it, and hardly was

the society formed before its opportunity arose. The promoters of the Pan-American Exposition, in the wish to make this beautiful and artistic, appointed a general director of color decorations, with an advisory committee, on the recommendation of the mural painters' national society.

The next such national organization to be formed was the American Society of Landscape Architects. Action which it promptly took in opposition to a proposed site for the Soldiers' and Sailors' monument in New York indicates one of its proper spheres of activity. But it means much for civic art that the new profession, with us, of landscape architecture, as distinguished from the purely commercial or the amateur landscape gardening, should have risen to the power and dignity of a national society. For consider how recently parks have been laid out in cities and how lately the serious attempt to make the surroundings of a home or factory really beautiful have ceased to be uncommon.

These societies represent the national artistic organizations, which are a power, clearly, for beauty in our communities. There is left, however, one form of society that may also be effective on occasion. An example of this is the Fine Arts Federation in New York. Here was a case where a city contained a great number of art societies of one kind and another. Their very number rendered united action difficult and tedious. Accordingly a central representative committee was proposed, and in response the Fir

Arts Federation was formed. This made co-operation a prompt and practical reality, and offered a means, as occasion might arise, for quickly and authoritatively expressing the judgment of the municipality's artistic element. The Fine Arts Federation's nomination of men from whom the mayor shall choose members for the municipal art commission is a case in point.

It will occur to the reader that Philadelphia's Art Federation is very similar. It was formed later, and differs mainly in the admission to membership of any lovers of beauty and organized workers for it, whether they be artists or not. There are plainly some recommendations to this plan, and an interesting national society has been formed on that basis, with headquarters in New York. This is the National Arts Club which has at once been well received. It designs to promote civic embellishment and the interests of all the decorative arts, to be a means for communication between art clubs, and a sort of central organization for all art lovers. The secretary, in writing of it, has suggested that this club of laymen inviting artists to membership is a striking supplement to the art societies inviting laymen to membership, for, together, we have "the beginnings of a bridge from both sides of the gulf that has hitherto lain between the artists and the public." The assured success of municipal art is dependent on the building of such a bridge.

In reviewing what may be done for civic æsthet-

lies through individuals grouped in societies, laic and artistic, the need of co-operation is evident. The gulf between art and public must be bridged, for municipal art is, first of all, public art. The result will be better, also, for co-operation. On the one hand, the art societies will keep before the "lay" societies an exalted and true ideal. On the other, the society composed of citizens representing the community at large ought to supply the often-needed sieve of common-sense, for the sifting of the practical from the purely dreamy. It should also furnish the means to realize what the artists can imagine, and so may many times render practical what otherwise were visionary. The sifting is an important work, for popularly municipal art has no greater danger than is afforded by the extravagance of enthusiasts. They dream of a New Jerusalem on earth, so beyond the range of probable attainment that the whole cause is injured by the senseless fantasy. To make cities cleaner and fairer, and so city life purer and happier, by adherence to the simplest rules of art and common-sense—that would work change enough to be the goal of modern effort for beauty in the city. The laic and the art society, therefore, do not work independently; but each, like the local and the general association, is a needed supplement to the other.

There is one other point to be made while speaking of common-sense. It is the necessity of moving slowly and carefully at the start—the old advice, "Be sure you are right; then go ahead."

This has been well put by the moving spirit of the strong Woman's Club of Denver. She says: "The Woman's Club did very little practical work for three years. An organization of this kind must first obtain the confidence of the community by conservative methods, the members must become familiar with each other and with their respective departments, and, above all, careful study must be made into the needs of the city or community in which such a body desires to work. It is better to theorize a year too long than to start into work and fail." Such words come graciously from a club that has done so much.

The purpose of this book, however, will have been missed if it has not made clear, without need of further waiting, that there are things which, beyond peradventure, are right and good and helpful to city beauty along rational lines. Individuals and existing societies may, then, do much, without waiting to test theories with time. It has been suggested that the city plant trees in front of every schoolhouse. Why should not church and synagogue, and every art society that owns a lot, do as well before its own property? The object-lessons afforded by practice are worth a deal of preaching. And what is said of tree planting will stretch over a wide range of deeds. The worker's vigilance should begin at home.





CHAPTER XVI

WORK OF OFFICIALS

IN considering the work that may be done for town and city beauty by officials an unexpected problem appears. It is the choice of means. It may be assumed that the official endeavors rest on popular approval; that, in fact, they are the "expression by representation" of the people's will. Officials, being thus authorized, can obviously carry out the popular wish with greater facility than could the people, since the officials have the civic machinery. So it is necessary only that the administration recognize the popular will and be desirous to obey it. That granted, the problem arises.

Shall municipal art be considered as a natural growth of civic progress, or as an exotic, a flower of luxury to be brought in and nourished carefully? If it be the latter, the wisest course will be the creation of a special department for its care, the entrusting of it to a commission unembarrassed by other duties and especially skilled in its nurture. If to make the town beautiful is as natural as to make it healthful and safe, if the task

is so bound up with the other accepted functions of government as to make its separation for the most part impossible, then the obligations to municipal art rest mainly with the regular officials. Suppose that the authorized representatives of the people perceive in the community a wish for greater beauty: on which of these theories should they proceed?

It is no surprise to find, in the variety of American city governments, acceptance now of one theory and now of the other. The range of official action for civic art is broad enough to include them both. Let us note some of their characteristics, observe the trend, and then, in review, broader than can usually be taken by the city official whom the problem suddenly confronts, we will discover if we can what course is wisest.

It may be remarked that beauty in environment is a good, proper, and natural desideratum. Otherwise the question would be not how to secure it; but rather the securing of it at all. As a good thing, then, progress toward it along natural lines, in the way of regular development, suggests good officials. They will be not only men who have skill and wisdom in the conduct of the city's affairs, but men of high ideals and conscientiousness. It would not be surprising to find such officials organizing to profit by one another's experience, and their organizations ought to be important factors in the battle for city beauty where the effort remains with the officials.

In the summer of 1894 a street commissioner of a Western city sent out a number of letters to mayors, boards of public works, and other municipal officers, suggesting the formation of just such a society as imagined. Its members should meet annually for the exchange of experiences and ideas. A large number of favorable responses were received, and in September sixty representatives of thirteen cities assembled in Buffalo, and organized. They chose as name "The American Society of Municipal Improvements," and made cities or city officials alone eligible for membership.[1] They formally declared their object to be the promotion and dissemination of a knowledge regarding "the best methods to be employed in the management of all municipal departments and the construction of municipal works." At its second convention, seventy cities were represented. The society became strong, influential, and to the suggestions in the annual pamphlet reports of its proceedings not a little of the actual work for city beauty has, indeed, been due.

Three years later, in 1897, the League of American Municipalities was formed. This sought similar ends. They are, as described in its constitution: "The general improvement and facilitation of every branch of municipal administration by the following means: First, the perpetuation of the organization as an agency for the co-operation of

[1] By an amendment to the constitution, adopted at the meeting of 1900, individuals who are not officials were, under certain conditions, made eligible for membership.

American cities in the practical study of all questions pertaining to municipal administration; second, the holding of annual conventions for the discussion of contemporaneous municipal affairs; and, third, the establishment and maintenance of a central bureau of information for the collection, compilation, and dissemination of statistics, reports, and all kinds of information relative to municipal government."

The central bureau of information is probably the most important branch of the league's work. It is designed to furnish without charge, to members, complete data on any required subject from all the important cities of the country. The league's energy is thus constructive, as distinguished from the distinctly destructive criticism of most reform associations. Municipalities alone are members, the idea being to secure a permanency of organization that would be imperilled were individual officials the members, and the cities pay a membership fee graded according to their population. The league has grown rapidly, and in its very large membership, including nearly two hundred cities, and in its extensive collection of reports is a strong possible power for urban beauty.

In addition to these national societies, State leagues have been formed in Ohio, Wisconsin, Kansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Pennsylvania, and in various other commonwealths. These again afford to city officials a chance to meet in annual session for the discussion of municipal topics and the exchange of ideas and experiences.

It is a matter of no slight significance to civic art that officials should thus voluntarily come together for periodic consultation and conference concerning the interests committed to their care. There was a time when such a thing could hardly have been dreamed of. If beauty be a proper and natural development of city administration, it should be furthered by these practical conferences.

And there is another factor of power which is helping the cause of city beauty. This does not represent exclusively the conscientiousness and interest of officials; but as it is partly representative of that, and is of much assistance to such officials, it may be mentioned here. It is the number of periodical publications — weekly, monthly, or quarterly—now devoted to municipal affairs and public improvements. Most obviously, of course, they are an effect of the widespread interest in city conditions, but they become also a cause of it, and are a means of suggesting solutions to many problems.

The alternative theory, that municipal art is a luxury, to be added to the town or city through an extraneous medium, being neither an inevitable product of development nor a thing which it is the duty of the regular officials to secure—this theory also has many adherents, and has resulted in the foundation of distinct organizations. In deference to it the municipal art commissions are created, and the responsibility for municipal art efforts and advance is put into their hands.

The first of these commissions was established in Boston. It was composed of men of experience and good taste, the *ex-officio* membership of the present body including, besides the Mayor, the President of the Public Library, the President of the Museum of Fine Arts, the President of the Boston Society of Architects, and the President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The charter of Greater New York subsequently provided for the appointment of a similar commission for that city. Of its *ex-officio* members we have already spoken. But in addition it required that the mayor should appoint six more members — one painter, one sculptor, one architect, and three other residents who should not be members of an arts profession—from a list submitted by the Fine Arts Federation of New York. The commissioners should serve without pay, but their expenses should be met by the city. The charter requires that:

No work of art shall become the property of the city of New York by purchase, gift, or otherwise, unless such work of art or design of the same, together with a statement of the proposed location of such work of art, shall first have been submitted to and approved by the commission; nor shall such work of art, until so approved, be erected or placed in or upon, or allowed to extend over or upon any street, avenue, square, common, park, municipal building, or other public place belonging to the city. The commission may, when they deem proper, also require a complete model of the proposed work of art to be submitted. The term "work of art" as used in this title shall apply

to and include all paintings, mural decorations, stained glass, statues, bas-reliefs or other sculptures, monuments, fountains, arches, or other structures of a permanent character, intended for ornament or commemoration. No existing work of art in the possession of the city shall be removed, re-located, or altered in any way without the similar approval of the commission.

On this general model art commissions have been established in Chicago, Baltimore, and other cities. Of their limitations, of some of their virtues and some of their faults, there has been specific mention in the chapter on sculpture; the commissions having first exercised their powers mainly upon that. Even in such narrow field they served a practical purpose at the earlier phase of our civic development. Unhappily, however, from the broader standpoint, their existence fosters a belief that city beauty is a costly, a formal, luxurious thing which may not be demanded as a natural right. They tend to reconcile the citizen to receiving from regular officials something less than he ought properly to have.

But because the municipal art commission does have a practical field of usefulness in supplementing the limitations of official taste, it commends itself as a temporary expedient, winning many friends. And federal officers are not so far in advance of municipal officers in art matters that a suggestion for a national commission, to pass upon art work for the nation, has lacked support.

In the Congress of 1900 a bill was introduced to secure such a commission. It was backed by the Public Art League, and provided a commission consisting of the President of the American Institute of Architects, the President of the National Sculpture Society, and the President of the National Academy of Design (architecture, sculpture, and painting), together with two other citizens to be appointed by the President of the United States. The body was given initiative as well as critical powers. The bill provided that the commission should pass upon the artistic merit of the design of every work of art to be purchased by the nation, constructed for it, or offered to it as a gift, this scrutiny extending even to coins, seals, medals, notes, stamps, and bonds; that it should institute, conduct, organize, and direct competitions in connection with the preliminary designs for such works, and should appoint special juries for the consideration of works requiring a certain kind of expert study. All the necessary expenses of the members of the commission were to be paid by the government when they were engaged in the public service, but no member was to receive any compensation, nor could a member take part in any of the competitions. The only works exempt from the provisions of the bill were certain public buildings costing $50,000 or less.

In a letter addressed to its friends and members the Public Art League advocated interest in the bill, attracting attention to its initiative features. "The future of art," it said, "as exemplified

in the landscape, buildings, and monuments of Washington, is at stake. Whether a grand, homogeneous scheme shall be devised that will be a future monument to the present age, or whether the present haphazard method shall continue, is the question now before the United States Congress. Congress has under consideration at the present time a memorial bridge to Arlington, a boulevard through the Mall, the enlargement of the executive mansion, a municipal building for the District of Columbia, a hall of records, a supreme court, and numerous statues and buildings for future use. The question for those interested in the artistic development of the country is, Shall these truly great projects be executed without a well-considered and developed plan to group buildings, landscape, statues, and bridges in one harmonious and grand whole, or shall they be executed as at present, under separate departments, here and there, anywhere, without general plan or grouping, and with little taste in individual structures?"

The proposed National Art Commission was, therefore, a deliberately planned means to further civic art in Washington through official channels. The bill, which would have done much for Washington, if practicable, would have done something also for nearly all cities. It was opposed on various grounds, mainly those of impracticability and probable inefficiency, by the strong Fine Arts Federation in New York, and though it received a good deal of approving comment in the newspapers

it failed to pass. Its introduction, terms, and purposes were, however, significant. It broached the extension to the nation at large of the present functions of a municipal art commission. In modified form these purposes of the bill were later approved, and the National Commission of Fine Arts is now an active and helpful agency.

It has been called a fault of the urban commission that it seems to put municipal art in a niche by itself, as a precious thing indeed, but as a luxury which the citizens may demand by favor, not by right. We ought to note, however, that, as use makes familiar, a sort of right to the luxury does come to be felt, and the art commission tends to become as "natural" a section of the administration as does the park commission, for example. This is not so sharp a turn about as it seems in statement. Analyze the average taxpayer's sentiment regarding the park commission, and it will be found that he considers the park a luxury, but one that he has a right to be granted if he chooses to demand it. A like conception of municipal art does not render irrelevant the criticism of a course that encourages a doubt of the right to beauty. There is a sharp distinction between that which is a natural right and that which one need expect only when he specifically asks for it and pays the cost. But it is something of a victory to have got away from the idea that the request can be refused.

It may be questioned whether the conception

of municipal art, where its provision is left to a separate department of the city government, has ever gone further than this. If there be such a place, Paris should be the city. Its civic art is in the hands of a network of commissions, and these extend through the national as well as the city government; while the people are artistic by nature and by education and have come to look upon beauty in the public works as something to be expected in the natural course of faithful administration. Paris therefore thought of municipal art as a proper and normal development of city government before confiding its care to commissions. Expert appointments to the latter were for purposes of consultation and advice, and the administrative functions still remained largely in the hands of the regular officials. The Commission for the Decoration of the Hôtel de Ville, for instance, is composed of thirty-two members, of whom twelve must be members of the municipal council. Even in the Administrative Commission of the Fine Arts, it is required that the prefect of the Seine, or his secretary-general, and the heads of the affected departments shall be members *ex-officio*. In the latter commission's own organization, the prefect is made president.

Clearly, then, the idea is that the eminent painters, sculptors, and architects who serve on these commissions do so to help the officials in the discharge of their regular duties, and not because art is an exotic which they alone can bring into the city—to deck it, in token of wealth and luxury.

They lend their expert taste to foster the city's beauty, as great physicians and bacteriologists lend expert knowledge to guard its health—the obligation for the performance of both these acts finally resting with the public servants who are administrators of the city.

The theory strikes a medium course between the other two. It does not put explicit faith in the competence of the ordinary official to guide the artistic expression of the community, nor does it deny to him any taste whatever, as does the American municipal commission which, as in New York, accords but one member to be representative of the city government. The theory assumes that art is like other subjects upon which expert knowledge throws not the sole, but a helpful, light. Officials simply call in, for consultation, those who can supplement their own outlook, which is from the standpoint of practical experience, with suggestions from a technical and purely ideal point of view. The theory is wise in its avoidance of extremes; and in Paris, with large and variegated commissions, it has worked well.

So we come to a middle course, between the two familiar in American cities, that municipal art is a natural product which officials are able to secure without expert advice, or that it is an exotic with which they are wholly incompetent to deal. The theory is better than either of these. The American city need not go to the length that Paris goes, absorbing to its official self all the municipal art endeavors. Much may wisely be left to private

initiative. But taking the point of view that beauty of town and city is as clearly the residents' right as is the health of the community and the safety of its property, such effort for municipal art as properly belongs to the various departments of city administration may be safely left to those departments, and the officials thereof held to account for the rich results, if they have authority to supplement their weakness with the community's fullest developed strength.

Membership in an advisory capacity in these active commissions becomes then a compliment. It is a public honor which, as in Paris, the greatest minds are glad to accept. The commission itself is wiser than if it were composed wholly of artists or wholly of officials. The birthright of municipal art is acknowledged, not sacrificed. The city gains because high, pure dreams of civic beauty are controlled by common sense, and are striven toward with the efficiency of trained experience and complete equipment. The artistic advisers, because they belong to the working committee, have more than merely critical power. They are in constant touch with all that is going forward. Their expert knowledge, their trained judgment, is available at every step; they can even originate, and so through official channels the city makes swift and rational progress toward beauty.

Our pathetic makeshifts, of an art commission standing aside to approve or condemn the plans that others make, or of conscientious officials gropingly conferring in annual conventions,

should be held, however encouraging, to be but temporary expedients. They are valuable not so much for what they do as for their showing of what we want to do. Far better is the movement, now spreading rapidly, by which comprehensive plans for improvement are secured. A student of the science of modern city building, or a small group of experts, is called in to advise. They are outsiders, that disinterestedness may be assured. A careful investigation is made of existing conditions, needs, and possibilities, and then a report is submitted that becomes the town's æsthetic chart. Sometimes there is recommended a radical change that requires immediate expenditure; but in the main there are mapped out changes to be realized slowly through a course of years in the progress of regular development. Of this each step can now be made to count toward the realization of the complete scheme; and there is at last evolved, without additional cost to the community, a scientifically planned and beautiful town or city.



CONCLUSION

ATTEMPT has been made in each foregoing chapter to sum up the work described in it, to note the trend, and to draw conclusions. There are a few thoughts, however, that belong to no special chapter because to no particular line of work. They belong to all. These may be gathered here, in final summary of the varied efforts in behalf of city beauty, submitted as a consideration of the aggregate effect.

The first of these is re-emphasis of the necessity for a suitable foundation upon which to lay our civic adornment, for one substantial, rational, satisfactory. There is wanted appreciation of the futility — of the humor and even of the pathos — of straining for urban dignity and beauty by putting statues on unpaved streets, by erecting pretty street lamps but hideous bridges; of the folly of expecting city beauty if good façades may be covered with glaring signs, if the water-front be unimproved, the sky-line lost in clouds of inky smoke. We need to prepare ourselves for negative work as well as positive; for restriction as well as encouragement; for consistency in what seem minor things.

Genuine progress toward beauty of town and city can be only logical and harmonious. If the crusade is to amount to anything, it must begin with demands for comfort and well-being that will appeal to all as reasonable. The wish for a beautiful street will remain always visionary until the want is felt of a good street and a clean one. The civic Renaissance that broke over Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was preceded by such a rational movement. It was in the middle of the thirteenth century that stone bridges began to span the rivers, and that streets and squares of towns were paved with flags. In the fourteenth century the cities presented a "spectacle of solid and substantial comfort," and the way was so prepared for the Renaissance.

Events move more rapidly to-day, but the order of procedure remains the same. The requirements of elementary construction are still essential to ultimate success. Communities that are going about the provision of adequate water and sewage facilities, that are spending their resources in the opening and paving of streets and for keeping them clean, are taking the first steps, even if unconsciously, toward municipal art. For this reason work for beauty in cities waits not for its beginning, but for results that are distinctive and striking, until the "boom period" has passed.

The aspiration that is needed for an effort that demands so much of drudgery and of patience must be high, earnest, firmly founded, and widespread.

The second thought, then, is that civic art is not an outgrowth only of fashion and large gifts. They may do much to make beautiful a village, but in a populous community the roots should reach down to the common people, to the people who individually have little money but who by the force of their numbers stamp the public taste and opinion, to those to whom the city's care is ultimately committed. There can be no exclusiveness to civic art.

Friends to the cause of beauty in the community should give their labor more than their money, for beauty of village and town is not a thing to be bought. A fine piece of sculpture will not do half as much as a little care and vigilance. A recent report of the municipal department of the Civic Club, of Philadelphia, giving results of contrasted investigations in the United States and Europe, said of the former: "No other country spends so much and gets so little for its money. The American can generally afford to spend money better than time for anything." He thinks he can; but the results show him to be mistaken. Generosity in funds and sordidness in labor make governments extravagant, and extravagance is followed by corruption. No legislation will give efficient city government if public interest be lacking, and municipal art waits for its final triumph upon efficient city government.

So there must be aspiration that is high, since it is to fear neither patience nor hard labor, the labor of interesting and instructing the public, of guiding

its taste, and the thankless labor of restrictive criticism. Such enthusiasm may well demand for itself the firm foundation of belief in the holiness of beauty. Looking out upon the world, let it note that if sunrise and sunset, if summer sky and winter night, if bending heaven and up-reaching earth have beauty, nature giving constant example of its coupling with utility, we may accept beauty of environment as part of the divine plan and fear to shut it out from the crowded life of cities. For can we say there is no holiness of beauty, that it has no essentialness to creation's scheme, when we find it shaping the field flower, the fern in densest forest, or the spray cap of a wave in trackless seas, lest in the aeons of time these be seen? Consider how the grasses bend in broken beauty at our feet in virgin country, how the sky lavishes its wealth of glory before careless eyes, how the great trees sway and call, put forth tender leaves at spring or flaunt an autumn splendor; how the birds translate rapture into music; and the constant, changeless stars soothe weary hours with measureless majesty. When God does this for a lonely child, shall we relax our vigilance to bring beauty to the homes of huddled thousands? Dare we say that a city must be ugly? Something very like religious fervor can be put into the zeal for city beauty, sustaining it through long patience and slow work.

It also appears, in review, that a dozen other practical motives than religious enthusiasm may give strength to the desire for city beauty. We

have seen the economic argument, in the attraction of the wealth and culture of the leisure class and the transient trade of tourists. We have seen the philanthropic argument, in the brightening of the lives of the poor; the educational, in the instructive possibilities of outdoor art; the political, in the awakening to civic pride. There are reasons in plenty for the interest of any city in the subject of municipal art.

In the swift review of the efforts for civic beauty, there has been revealed the fact that some places possess special advantages over others. As a rule, indeed, a municipality desires the enhancement of its beauty or splendor for selfish reasons, because beauty will redound to its own glory, its prosperity, to the happiness of its people. Rarely does it seek a broader goal, or have the co-operation and sympathy of other communities. Yet occasionally that happens, and a nation bends its energies to the beautifying of its capital, as in the case of Paris and in some degree of Washington, in realization that the glory which is added to that city is added to the nation, that this municipality is representative of all. A peculiar advantage attaches to such cities, which are of the elect. As anciently Athens strode forward, with the resources and exhaustless energy of a great people behind her, so these may avail themselves of an impulse not wholly their own. It is given to them to supplement the local civic pride and affection which must suffice for other cities.

Or a community, with high ideal, may seek to represent the artistic aspiration of the district in which it is, as Detroit has lately dreamed of taking her place again in the forefront of westward spreading civilization, by building a splendid memorial at the gateway of the Northwest lakes; or as New York has dreamed of a civic monument illustrating the nation's pride in the prowess of the navy. The success of such undertakings, however, requires an outside recognition of the justice of the city's claim to be adequately representative of the district. For the innumerable minor victories that go to make up civic art, we have seen that no more incentive, happily, is needed than local love and pride can easily afford.

The question arises, What is to be the character of the new-born civic art, how among the arts is it to stand? It is to stand high and proudly. The greatest work of the past has always been that produced to meet a public demand, or that, at least, which was done for the people. For them arose the temples of Greece, for them the mediæval cathedrals, for them were made the sculptured "Gates of Paradise" on the Baptistry of Florence, for them have been executed the frescoes, the altar paintings, the public memorials, and the triumphal arches.

The artist, working in his studio because the spirit within him makes him work though he knows not to whom the product may appeal, feels a new inspiration when the people are his patron. Give

him a library or court-house to decorate, and new power comes into brush or chisel. The public that has stood idly by, indifferent to sale or exhibition, surges through the artistic structure of which it is an owner, thrilling the painter or sculptor with its new interest in his work.

There is not a great deal of public art in the United States; but, as far as this goes, it is already the best art that we have. And leading now, it will still lead—in a nation where art will yet go far, since the people are educated, ambitious for art, are rich, and free.

It may be worth while, in closing, to differentiate the civic art, whose widespread renaissance is now awaited, from most of that which has preceded. How it will differ in motive from that with which the Medici made Florence glorious! Cosimo de' Medici is said to have expended four hundred thousand golden florins on works of art, and there was not a civic prince of Italy who did not recognize, in that example, a suggestion of how to propitiate his subjects by the beautifying of a city. To-day cities are adorned by the people themselves, of their own free will, in love of home. Mr. Gladstone once noted Americans as conspicuous for combining enthusiasm for their country with love for their cities. Hence comes the spur for our civic art.

The new art differs largely also from the use of art which the Church has made, for this is to begin in practical charity, advancing, as we have seen,

only through philanthropic and educational impulse to, at last, "art for art's sake," to the love of beauty for beauty's self. Its original motives will be the best that the world has had. The moral and spiritual standards of the people will be advanced by this art, and their political ideals will rise with a civic pride and a community spirit born of the appreciation that they are citizens "of no mean city."

How worthy an end, then, is municipal art for individual and associated effort! Could man or woman, woman's club, or civic organization consecrate itself to higher purpose?[1] On how many sides—moral, physical, intellectual, political, and economic—does an effort for beauty in towns and cities touch the welfare of mankind! It is no new dream. The various civilizations of the past have left in cities the record of their art. We judge them, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Mediæval, by the degree of their urban culture, and do not consider that we shall be judged as are they. There only has been a moment of forgetfulness. In the newness of our country and the modern tendency to commercialism, civic art was overlooked for a

[1] It need scarcely be said, in this connection, that State Federations of women's clubs now usually have committees on town and village improvement, and that at the latest biennial sessions of the General (National) Federation, some meetings were devoted to the consideration of municipal art; also that such an organization as the Reform Club, New York, has lately thought it worth while to dedicate complete issues of its publication, *Municipal Affairs*, to the subject of City Beauty.

while. We have begun now to remember; and remembering, let us strive to realize, for a hundred reasons, the vision of artist and poet, becoming humanity's—the dream of cities beautiful. In the Bible itself the progress of mankind is represented as ending in a celestial city, after having begun in a garden.

In 1899 the Art Workers' Guild of London gave at the Guild Hall a spectacle, which they called a revival of the masque. It was named "Beauty's Awakening," and closed with a vision of the world's fair cities. One by one they came forward, picturesque and many-colored, to be introduced by the Muse of History. There was Thebes, wearing garments of Egyptian blue and cloth of gold; Athens, in flowing white drapery, bearing a sculptured image; Rome, in the imperial purple; and Byzantium, in lilac and gold, and splendidly crowned. Coming to later days, we saw Florence attired in deep-blue, carrying a blood-red lily; Venice in crimson, with an upheld casket of jewels; Nuremberg in dull red and yellow, with Albert Dürer in her train; Paris in gorgeous brocade, and wearing a crown; and Oxford in black robe and scarlet hood. Last of all was London, bearing about her the tokens of wealth, but with her train sadly soiled.

It is in laying to heart the lesson of this allegory, through turning to account the great riches, the mighty impulses of philanthropy and education, the high sanitary ideal, and the resources of modern science and engineering, that men and women are

to-day setting about the purging of London's gown, with a trust in ultimate success; that modern cities hope to take their place with the little Thebes and Athens and Florence of long ago.

In the world-wide civic battle between Ugliness and Beauty, consider what allies have now been gathered to Beauty's side. To spur on these allied forces to new confidence and endeavor the present record of the combat has been compiled.



APPENDIX

MASSACHUSETTS

AN ACT TO CODIFY AND AMEND THE LAWS RELATIVE TO THE PRESERVATION OF TREES

[ACTS OF 1899, CHAPTER 330]

Be it enacted, etc., as follows:

SECTION 1. Every town shall at its annual meeting for the election of town officers elect a tree warden, who shall serve for one year and until his successor is elected and qualified. He may appoint such number of deputy tree wardens as he deems expedient, and may at any time remove them from office. He and his deputies shall receive such compensation for their services as the town may determine, and, in default of such determination, as the selectmen may prescribe. He shall have the care and control of all public shade trees in the town, except those in public parks or open places under the jurisdiction of park commissioners, and of these also he shall take the care and control if so requested in writing by the park commissioners. He shall expend all funds appropriated for the setting out and maintenance of such trees. He may prescribe such regulations for the care and preservation of such trees, enforced by suitable fines and forfeitures, not exceeding twenty dollars in any one case, as he may deem just and expedient; and such regulations, when approved by the selectmen and posted in two or

more public places in the town, shall have the force and effect of town by-laws. It shall be his duty to enforce all provisions of law for the preservation of such trees.

SECTION 2. Towns may appropriate annually a sum of money, not exceeding in the aggregate fifty cents for each of its ratable polls in the preceding year, to be expended by the tree warden in planting shade trees in the public ways, or, if he deems it expedient, upon adjoining land, at a distance not exceeding twenty feet from said public ways, for the purpose of shading or ornamenting the same: *provided, however*, that the written consent of the owner of such land shall first be obtained. All shade trees within the limits of any public way shall be deemed public shade trees.

SECTION 3. Whoever, other than a tree warden or his deputy, desires the cutting or removal, in whole or in part, of any public shade tree, may apply to the tree warden, who shall give a public hearing upon the application at some suitable time and place, after duly posting notices of the hearing in two or more public places in the town, and also upon the said tree: *provided, however*, that the warden may, if he deems it expedient, grant permission for such cutting or removal, without calling a hearing, if the tree in question is on a public way outside of the residential part of the town, the limits of such residential part to be determined by the selectmen. No tree within such residential part shall be cut by the tree warden, except to trim it, or removed by him without a hearing as aforesaid; but in all cases the decision of the tree warden shall be final.

SECTION 4. Towns may annually raise and appropriate such sum of money as they deem necessary, to be expended under the direction of the tree warden in exterminating insect pests within the limits of their public ways and places, and in

the removal from said public ways and places of all trees and other plants upon which such pests naturally breed: *provided, however*, that where an owner or lessee of real estate shall, to the satisfaction of the tree warden, annually exterminate all insect pests upon the trees and other plants within the limits of any public way or place abutting on said real estate, such trees and plants shall be exempt from the provisions of this section.

SECTION 5. Whoever affixes to any tree in a public way or place a play-bill, picture, announcement, notice, advertisement, or other thing, whether in writing or otherwise, or cuts, paints, or marks such tree, except for the purpose of protecting it and under a written permit from the tree warden, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding fifty dollars for each offence.

SECTION 6. Whoever wantonly injures, defaces, breaks or destroys an ornamental or shade tree within the limits of any public way or place shall forfeit not less than five nor more than one hundred dollars, to be recovered by complaint, one half to the complainant and the other half to the use of the town.

SECTION 7. Whoever negligently or carelessly suffers a horse or other beast driven by or for him, or a beast belonging to him and lawfully in a public way or place, to break down, injure, or destroy a shade or ornamental tree within the limits of said public way or place, or whoever negligently or wilfully by any other means breaks down, injures, or destroys any such tree, shall be liable to the penalties prescribed in the foregoing section, and shall in addition be liable for all damages caused thereby.

SECTION 8. It shall be the duty of the tree warden to enforce the provisions of the preceding sections. [*Approved May 4, 1899.*]

ADDENDA

Note to Pg. 11.

Boston's improvement of the Charles has passed from the stage of discussion to that of execution. The result reverses the municipal custom of many years and will well repay study.

Note to Pg. 36.

In the building of the new East River bridges, since the first edition of this book was printed, careful thought of appearances did develop, requirement being made that designs be approved by the Municipal Art Commission.

Note to Pg. 69.

Legislation on this point has increased in the United States. St. Louis adopted an ordinance making 150 feet the maximum height; Chicago put the limit in 1898 at 130 feet; the smaller city of Springfield, Mass., has put it at 100 feet; Washington proportions building height to street width; and Boston created two building districts, business and residential, putting the limit in the former at 125 feet, and in the latter at 80 feet, except on especially wide thoroughfares. These limits seem high compared to Europe's, but it is something new in America to have any limit imposed.

Note to Pg. 76.

The law has been enacted. Discussion of continued progress, both restrictive and creative, in dealing with advertisements, may be found in articles by the author in the *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1904, and July, 1904.

Note to Pg. 104.

This department has already become of historical interest as the forerunner of many departments—and even of whole exhibitions—devoted to the physical improvement of cities. Dresden came first, in 1903, with a national Municipal Exhibit; but municipal exhibits of national and international character have come fast since then in many countries. And following the lead (1905) of Chicago, permanent Municipal Museums have been opened in several American cities.

Note to Pg. 161.

The $100,000 mark was reached in 1902, and in 1906 the fund exceeded $120,000. At the end of 1912 the total of the various funds exceeded $160,000.

Note to Pg. 162.

In 1904 The American Park and Outdoor Art Association was merged with the American League for Civic Improvement (Pg. 262) under the title American Civic Association (headquarters in Washington, D. C.), and its objects were broadened to include those of the League.

Note to Pg. 168.

The Philadelphia "Parkway Project," as it is called, only slightly modified and very costly, is now in course of realization.

Note to Pg. 182.

A more recently developed series of Chicago playgrounds, combining park and playground features, having elaborate "field houses" and strongly emphasizing beauty, are considered the most efficient in the world.

Note to Pg. 245.

Since this book first appeared the high ideals and civic spirit of many teachers have created a place in numerous schools for the subjects of this volume.

Note to Pg. 261.

The Guild of Civic Art later prepared a general plan of improvement for the city of Toronto, working this out on scientific and artistic lines, with the idea that the city in developing should strive for this ideal. In so doing, the Guild did what many other cities—as Harrisburg, Detroit, Columbus, Denver, San Francisco, Oakland, Honolulu, etc., —have ordered done, with usually better chances of success, by experts from outside.

Note to Pg. 265.

This commission was appointed in 1901, and is now well known by students of civic progress. Its notable success did much to encourage the making of "expert plans" for cities.



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